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BY

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Proverbs to Ezekiel

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PROVERBS

The Book of Proverbs

Introduction

The title of this Book in the Hebrew Bible is "Mishle," which is derived from the verb "Mashal," to rule, hence short sayings which are given to govern life and conduct. It also has the meaning of "resemblance," that is a parable. Many proverbs are concentrated parables. Our English word "proverbs" comes from the word "proverbia" used in the Latin translation. Traditionally the authorship of the whole book is attributed to Solomon, but the book itself does not claim this, nor does it sustain the Solomonic authorship of the entire collection. The major portion of the book is attributed to Solomon and there can be no question that he is the author of it. In First Kings iv:32 we read that the great king uttered 3,000 proverbs in which the wisdom given to him is illustrated. But the book does not contain this number of proverbs.

Chapter xxv begins with the statement: "These are also proverbs which the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah, copied out." This pious king must have had a great interest in compiling and preserving certain portions of the Word of God. According to this statement in Proverbs he must have commissioned certain scribes to add to the previous collection of proverbs by Solomon, other proverbs, which up to that time had remained uncollected. Then in chapter xxx we find the words of Agur the son of Jakeh, and in chapter xxxi the words of King Lemuel.

From these facts which appear in the book it is clear that the composition of the entire book of Proverbs cannot be attributed to Solomon. The book begins with "The Proverbs of Solomon the Son of David, king of Israel". In the beginning of chapter x we read again: "The Proverbs of Solomon". It seems clear then that in chapter i-xxiv we have the proverbs of Solomon; chapter xxv to the end contains also proverbs by the King, except the last two chapters. In all probability the scribes of Hezekiah who copied out the proverbs of chapter xxv-xxix added the last two chapters. What Criticism states that "the later chapters of this book point to the second or third century before Christ" is only an assertion.

Another feature of this book is, that numerous times a person is addressed as "My son," and the personal pronoun is often used "thou, thee, thy," etc. The sections where we find this are chapter i-ix; xix:20; xxiv:34 and xxvii; xxix:27. Who then is the person addressed? Does Solomon address some one or is it Solomon himself who is addressed? Dr. J. W. Thirtle in his "Old Testament Problems" distinguishes between proverbs written *by* Solomon and those which

were written *for* him. All those which are addressed to "My son," and in which the personal pronoun is used, it is claimed, are given to Solomon by "wise men or teachers" and that all these sententious sayings were given to young Solomon by these men to fit him for rulership. But this produceth other difficulties. The proverbs of Solomon would in this case be very few in comparison with the size of the book, and furthermore we do not know who these wise men or teachers were who instructed the King and wrote such words of wisdom.

It seems to us that there is another way in which these sections containing the personal address, "My son," may be explained. When the Lord appeared unto Solomon in Gibeon, He said unto him, "Ask what I shall give thee." Then Solomon asked for an understanding heart, to discern between good and bad. Then the Lord said, "Lo I have given thee a wise and understanding heart" (1 Kings iii:5, etc.) His prayer was answered. Then the Lord must have spoken to him by His Spirit and given Him the instructions he needed as the king over His people Israel. It is more than probable that the sections in which the address "My son" and the personal pronoun is used contain the heavenly instructions given to the young king in the beginning of his reign by the Lord Himself. One cannot be dogmatic about this, but if such was the case the difficulties disappear. There is no need to put these proverbs for Solomon into the mouths of unknown wise men. It was the Lord who spoke to Solomon, addressing him thus and Solomon guided by the Spirit of God penned all these words. But it seems that the beginning of chapter iv contains a brief autobiography of Solomon relating to his training. If wise men or teachers had spoken these words their names would have been mentioned and their sayings would have appeared in a different setting, without being found in different sections of the book.

As Dr. Thirtle has pointed out, these sayings, instructions given to Solomon, as we take it by the Lord in answer to his prayer for an understanding heart, cover certain commands relating to Israel's kings, as given in the law of Moses. These commands we find in Deut. xvii:14-20.

"When thou art come unto the land which the Lord the God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me; thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the Lord thy God shall choose one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother. But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the Lord hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold. And it

shall be when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel."

Now in the sections of Proverbs, pointed out above, in which the personal address is used, some instructions are given which correspond to the commandments relating to the king, as found in the passage from Deuteronomy which we have quoted. Of special interest are the repeated warnings against the "strange woman,"The strange woman against which the Spirit of God warned him in his youth, are the women of other nations, Gentiles. The passage in Deuteronomy says, "Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away." The Spirit of the Lord anticipated the sad end of the great and wise king and therefore warned him against the strange woman, under the picture of the harlot, who ensnares and whose ways end in death. But the heavenly wisdom which had instructed him and warned was not heeded. It is written, "King Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, the Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in to you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods. Solomon clave unto these in love" (1 Kings xi.) Then followed his downfall. "It came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods." Then he worshipped Ashtoreth, Milcom and Chemosh and other idol gods. The words of wisdom the Lord gave him, thus giving him understanding, were not heeded and the allurements of the strange woman, of which his inspired pen had warned, became a mournful fact in his own history.

The literary form of these proverbs is mostly in the form of couplets or distichs. The two clauses of the couplet are generally related to each other by what has been termed parallelism, according to Hebrew poetry. Three kinds of parallelism have been pointed out.

1. Synonymous Parallelism. Here the second clause restates what is given in the first clause.

> "Judgments are prepared for scorners
> And stripes for the back of fools."—Proverbs xix:29.

2. Antithetic Parallelism. Here a truth which is stated in the

first clause is made stronger in the second clause by contrast with an opposite truth.

"The light of the righteous rejoiceth,
But the lamp of the wicked shall be put out."—Proverbs xiii:9.

3. Synthetic Parallelism. The second clause develops the thought of the first.

"The terror of a king is as the roaring of a lion—
He that provoketh him to anger sinneth against his own life."—Proverbs xx:2.

The Teachings of Proverbs

The Proverbs, speaking generally, give moral teachings as to human conduct, often giving the contrast between the righteous and the wicked. But besides this there is much which goes deeper. Many of these short sayings can be applied to the Lord Jesus Christ and to the Gospel. There is one portion which speaks definitely of the Son of God, our Lord, who is Wisdom. This is found in chapter viii:22-31. When we read in chapter xiii:7, "There is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great wealth," we can well think of Him who was rich and became poor for our sake that we by His poverty might be rich. Then there are verses which speak of a friend, "There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother" (xviii:24). "A friend loveth at all times, and is born as a brother for adversity" (xvii:17). Well do we think, in reading such and similar verses in this book, of our Lord, who is the friend of sinners. Proverbs in spiritual instruction and application has an inexhaustible wealth.

The Spirit of God makes use of this Book in quoting from it in the New Testament: Chapter i:16 is quoted in Romans iii:15; iii:11-12 in Hebrews xii:5-6, also in Rev. liii:19; iii:34 in James iv:6 and 1 Peter v:5; iv:26 in Hebrews xii:13; x:12 in 1 Peter iv:8; xi:31 in 1 Peter iv:18; xxv:21-22, in Romans xii:20; and xxvi:11 in 2 Peter ii:22.

Proverbs ought to be studied by believers as diligently as any other portion of God's Holy Word. The prayerful searcher will soon be rewarded by many nuggets of divine truth.

We make another suggestion on the study of this Book. Many of the lessons given in these proverbs are illustrated by the lives of the godly and ungodly recorded in the Bible. It will prove a most helpful occupation to fit the experiences of these two classes as found in the Word of God to many of these proverbs.

The Division of Proverbs

As already stated in our introduction the Book of Proverbs, as a book, was not in existence in the days of Solomon; it was completed through the interest, no doubt inspired interest, of King Hezekiah. That Solomon wrote the proverbs as attributed to him is beyond question.

The scope of this book is quite simple for it is clearly marked in its contents.

We find seven sections.

I. **INSTRUCTIONS OF WISDOM GIVEN TO SOLOMON.** Chapters i-ix.

II. **THE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON.** Chapters x-xix:19.

III. **INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN TO SOLOMON.** Chapter xix:20-xxiv.

IV. **THE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON COLLECTED BY HEZEKIAH.** Chapter xxv-xxvi.

V. **INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN TO SOLOMON.** Chapters xxvii-xxix.

VI. **THE WORDS OF AGUR THE SON OF JAKEH.** Chapter xxx.

VII. **THE WORDS OF KING LEMUEL TAUGHT HIM BY HIS MOTHER.** Chapter xxxi.

It will be seen at a glance that instructions given to Solomon alternate with the proverbs of Solomon, teaching others as he first had been taught. The description of the virtuous woman in the last chapter is in the Hebrew in the form of an acrostic. The twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet are found in these verses, just like in the alphabetic Psalms and in Lamentations.

Analysis and Annotations

A detailed analysis, as we have made it in other books, cannot be fully made in this collection of proverbs. Most of them are detached and each has a message by itself. To interpret each separately, to point out the many spiritual lessons, as well as prophetic application, to show their relation to other portions of the Word of God and to explain them by incidents taken from the Bible, would require volumes; and even then the spiritual meaning would not be exhausted. All we can do is to hint at their meaning and give some annotations which, under God, may be helpful in the closer study of this book.

I. INSTRUCTIONS OF WISDOM GIVEN TO SOLOMON

Chapter i:8-ix.

CHAPTER I.

1. The Introduction. 1-7.
2. Warning against Evil Companions and Coveteousness. 8-19.
3. The Appeal of Wisdom. 20-33.

1. The Introduction: Verses 1-7. The introductory words of these verses present the object of the book. These proverbs were given to Solomon, and contain instructions he received from the Lord. They are given to him that he might know wisdom. The word wisdom is the characteristic word of this book for it occurs in the original language 42 times, which is 6 times 7. Six in Scripture is the human number, while 7 is the divine number. Wisdom is the first thing to be acquired, and that is followed by instruction, or admonition, to receive the instruction, the discipline of wisdom. The instructions are in justice, judgment and equity and they give subtilty to the simple. The word "subtilty" means prudence; the word "simple" has the meaning of

"guileless." Solomon was a young man when the Lord answered his prayer for a wise and understanding heart, and in these proverbs given to him he received "knowledge and discretion" (thoughtfulness). Thus by the Word of God comes wisdom and that produceth understanding and a moral character in the man who trusteth in the Lord and is obedient to Him. To hear marks the wise man, and hearing will increase learning, learning will give understanding so that proverbs can be understood and also the interpretation. The latter word is only used once more in the Old Testament. It has the meaning of "satire." The words of the wise and their dark sayings (riddles) are the words of the wise men of this world, the philosophers. The meaning is not that these wise men were the instructors of the young monarch, but that the divinely given proverbs rightly understood would protect him from accepting the foolish things of human wisdom, of philosophy. "This verse (6) intimates that the aim of the Book is to confer an initiation which will make the possessor free of all the mysteries of the Wise."*

Verse 7 contains the keynote to the entire book. (See ix:10; Eccles. xii:13; Job xxviii:28; Psalm cxi:10.) The word "fear" means a godly fear, reverence. This fear of the Lord is mentioned fourteen times in Proverbs. This child-like reverence, so sadly lacking among the young of our day, is the beginning of knowledge; there is no true knowledge apart from the fear of the Lord. It means to acknowledge the Lord, adore and worship Him, bow in faith to His revelation and put it above everything else. The foolish despise wisdom and instruction, they follow the philosophies of this world. To acknowledge the Lord to reverence and fear Him is thus written over the portal of the house of wisdom.

2. **Warning against Evil Companions and Coveteousness: Verses 8-19.** The practical instructions begin with an exhortation of obedience to the father and mother. "My son" is the address of the Lord to Solomon, who thus ack-

*T. T. Perowne.

knowledges him as His child. Obedience to parents is not only commanded in the law dispensation; it is as prominent in the dispensation of grace, as we learn from Ephesians vi:1 and Colossians iii:20. One of the marks of the last days among those who profess Christianity, who have the form of Godliness but have not the power of it, is "disobedience to parents" (2 Timothy iii). Such disobedience, so prominent to-day among professing Christians, is coupled with disobedience to God and rejection of His Word. Much of the ungodliness to day has its source in this disobedience. This is followed by warning against wicked associates, those who are lawless and desperate men, thieves and murderers, who pass through the country greedy for gain. Solomon is exhorted not to walk in the way with them. The one who fears the Lord walks in separation and keeps away from the paths of the wicked. Verse 16 is quoted by Paul in the third chapter of Romans. There is a striking resemblance of this passage to Psalm x in which we have a description of the wicked, prophetically indicating the man of sin. (See annotations on that Psalm.)

3. The Appeal of Wisdom: Verses 20-33. Wisdom now speaks and wisdom in this first section of Proverbs is a person, a Divine person. The eighth chapter gives us a wonderful vision of that Person, the Son of God, who is the Wisdom. First stands the call of Wisdom. The call may be answered or rejected. Wisdom promises if the call is obeyed, "Behold, I will pour my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you." But if the call is refused the consequences will be disastrous. The appeal of Wisdom closes with a precious promise.

> "But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely
> And shall be quiet from fear of evil."

This appeal of wisdom, the call, the promise, the refusal and the calamity of the refusal to listen to Him who speaks furnishes an excellent theme for preaching the Gospel to the unsaved.

CHAPTER II.

1. The Pursuit of Wisdom and its Results. 1-9.
2. Preservation from the Evil Man and the Strange Woman. 10-19.
3. The Path of the Righteous. 20-22.

1. The Pursuit of Wisdom and its Results: Verses 1-9. This second chapter of Divine Instructions begins with an exhortation to pursue after wisdom. The sayings of Wisdom, that is the Word of the Lord, must be received, laid up, the ear must incline to hear them, the heart must be applied to understanding. In verse 3 mention is made of prayer. There must be crying after knowledge and for understanding and that must be followed by seeking and searching. If these conditions are fulfilled then the fear of the Lord is one's portion as well as the knowledge of God. These are excellent instructions for the study of the Word of God. If followed then the Lord will give Wisdom (James i:5). He layeth up sound Wisdom for the righteous. He Himself is the Wisdom and in Him are laid up all the treasures of Wisdom and knowledge (Colossians ii:3). He also is a shield (the better word for buckler) to them that walk uprightly, and the way of His Saints is preserved by Him.

2. Preservation from the Envious Man and the Strange Woman: Verses 10-19. When wisdom entereth the heart and the soul rejoiceth in true knowledge, what blessed consequences will follow! There is preservation and deliverance. The way of the evil man, the proud, the ungodly and their crooked ways hold out no attraction to those who love and seek wisdom. Then for the first time the strange woman, the foreign woman is mentioned. While a prostitute is meant, the warning to Solomon was to beware of the allurement of those who were outside of the commonwealth of Israel, the heathen Cannanitish cults in which prostitution played such a prominent part. If we look on these instructions as given to a young man, we see the temptations outlined which are peculiar to the young—disobedience to parents, evil companions and the lust of the flesh.

3. The Path of the Righteous: Verses 20-22. He who ordereth his conduct according to Divine instruction will walk in the way of the good and keep the paths of the righteous, dwelling in the land of promise while the wicked have no such hope.

CHAPTER III.

1. The Call and Promise of Wisdom. 1-10.
2. Happy is the Man that Findeth Wisdom. 11-20.
3. Promise and Instruction. 21-35.

1. The Call and Promise of Wisdom: Verses 1-10. The call to obedience is followed by promise. The promise is like all the promises to an earthly people "for length of days and long life". Here are some blessed exhortations loved and cherished by all His people (Verses 5-7). How happier, and more fruitful the children of God would be if they obeyed constantly this instruction: "In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths."

2. Happy is the Man that findeth Wisdom. Verses 11-20. Verses 11-12 are quoted in Hebrews xii. The man who findeth wisdom, that is who knows the Lord, is happy. If we look upon wisdom as personified in the Lord Jesus Christ we can read "His ways are pleasantness, and all His paths are peace. He is a tree of life to them that lay hold on Him, and happy is every one that retaineth Him" (17-18).

3. Promise and Instruction. Verses 21-34. The words of the Lord kept are life to the soul, grace to the neck; they insure safety; they protect and keep by day and by night. Each verse has a blessed meaning. This chapter ends with the promise that the wise shall inherit glory while the promotion of fools will be shame.

CHAPTER IV.

1. Solomon's Training. 1-9.
2. Hear, O my Son. Receive my Sayings. 10-19.
3. My Son, Attend to my Words. 20-27.

1. Solomon's Training: Verses 1-9. This passage shows the early training which Solomon received and he passeth on the instructions. It is said that these verses formed a model for many Puritan homes in England and the Scotland of the covenant. He was the beloved one, his father's true son. Note the different exhortation, about wisdom: Forget it not; forsake her not; love her; exalt her. Then the promises: She shall preserve thee; she shall keep thee; she shall promote thee; she gives honor; an ornament of grace for the head and a crown of glory. If we take wisdom and make it the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word, what blessed food for the soul we will enjoy!

2. Hear, O my Son. Receive my Sayings: Verses 10-19. Here we find instructions for Solomon and all the godly with the corresponding promises. Then there is the warning concerning the path of the wicked and a contrast between the way of the righteous and the way of the wicked.

"But the way of the righteous is as the dawn of light
That shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

This is a blessed statement. As soon as we accept the true wisdom, the Lord Jesus Christ, we enter upon a way which faceth the east, the sunrise. The light of the coming dawn illumines that path, and at some time the perfect day will break when all shadows flee away.

3. My Son, attend to my Words. Verses 20-27. Instructions to receive and to obey the words of wisdom are the contents of this address. The eye is never to be taken off from the words of the Lord; they are to be kept in the midst of the heart. How important to listen to such counsel, even for us, His children:

"Keep thy heart with all diligence;
For out of it are the issues of life."

CHAPTER V.

1. Shun the Strange Woman and Sinful Passion. 1-14.
2. The Life of Chastity. 15-23.

1. Shun the Strange Woman and Sinful Lust. Verses 1-14. It is a warning against literal fornication and the accompanying spiritual fornication, turning away from the worship of Jehovah and worshipping idols. The dreadful results of sinful lust are vividly described. How many a young man has found out the truth as given in these words in his licentious life.

> "And thou mourn at thy latter end
> When thy flesh and thy body are consumed."

Solomon received these repeated warnings, yet after great prosperity and honor came to him, and his glory spread in every direction, like many a rich and successful man of today, these warnings were not heeded and he had to experience in his own life the truths of these words he had penned by the Spirit of God.

2. The Life of Chastity. Verses 15-23. Here we have a sweet exhortation and picture of marital fidelity and a picture of true love in family life. How the Christian family should manifest something greater than this is revealed in Ephesians v.

CHAPTER VI.

1. The Surety. 1-5.
2. The Sluggard. 6-11.
3. The Naughty, Good-for-nothing Person. 12-19.
4. The Strange Woman. 20-35.

1. The Surety: Verses 1-5. These are instructions concerning contracts, in being surety for a neighbor and the danger connected with it.

2. The Sluggard. Verses 6-11. The sluggard is commanded to go to the ant for a lesson. (See also xxx:25.) The ant is a marvellous little creature. That which modern science has found out by close observation of the life of this little insect is here tersely stated by the words of the Lord, the Creator. They swarm in the woods and in the fields; they work day and night; they capture, train and

nourish aphides, which they use as a kind of slave. They build vast and symmetrical mounds, which they use as homes and barns, and which are, relatively to the size of the tiny builders, three times larger than the Egyptian pyramids. They march and labor in unison, have their own wars, nourish their sick, and all is done without a chief, an overseer or a ruler. Yet man with a higher intelligence and a higher work to do can be a sluggard.

3. The Naughty, Good-for-nothing Person. The description of the sluggard is followed by that of a worthless person. It is a son of Belial (the term used in the Hebrew) whose picture is drawn. He is a naughty person, a good-for-nothing, a man of iniquity; he has a lying mouth. A minute description of his way and work is given; everywhere he makes mischief and causeth division. But suddenly there comes the calamity upon him. He shall be broken and that without remedy. Such is the way of the man who despiseth wisdom, follows his old nature and plunges ultimately into the outer darkness. Finally there will yet appear "the man of sin," that wicked one, in whom all these evils will culminate and he shall suddenly be broken without remedy. (See Daniel xi:45.) We do well to read carefully the six things which the Lord hateth (16-19).

The Strange Woman: Verses 20-35. The words of the Lord, the commandment and the law as stated here, are of unspeakably great importance. They are to be in the heart and about the neck.

> "When thou walkest, it shall lead thee;
> When thou sleepest, it shall watch over thee;
> And when thou wakest, it shall talk with thee."

They are a lamp and a light; they are the way of life. Then follows another description of the evil woman, a warning not to lust after her beauty nor to be taken by her eyelids. These oriental women painted their faces; by plucking their eyebrows they made them almond-shaped. Alas! that in the society of the Twentieth Century the women and girls of a so-called Christian civilization should

do the same thing, and we fear, for the same purpose as the whorish woman described in this chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

1. The Description of the Strange Woman continued: Verses 1-27. The entire chapter is a continuation of the strange woman and the warning against her. The Word and the Law of the Lord will keep the obedient son from her. If Solomon had obeyed the Word of God, not to multiply wives (Deut. xvii:17) his end would not have been spent in the degrading fellowship with the harlots of other nations. The description is very graphic. What the word pictures is as prominent in the great centers of Christendom as it was thousands of years ago in Babylon and Egypt. And so it is still true:

> "She hath cast down many wounded;
> Yea, many strong men have been slain by her.
> Her house is the way to hell,
> Going down to the chambers of death."

But think of Solomon after having received these inspired descriptions and warnings, that he should have been forgetful of them all.

CHAPTER VIII.

1. The Call and Appeal of Wisdom. 1-11.
2. What Wisdom is and what Wisdom Gives. 12-21.
3. Wisdom; the Person, who He is. 22-31.
4. The Renewed Appeal. 32-36.

1. The Call and Appeal of Wisdom: Verses 1-11. This is one of the most interesting chapters in the entire book. It begins with a call and appeal of wisdom, much like the call and appeal of the first chapter. If wisdom calls, has a voice, then wisdom must also be a person. Who personified wisdom is we learn most blessedly in this chapter. Wisdom calls to the sons of men; wisdom speaks of plain and excellent things; she speaks the truth; her words are the words of righteousness; wisdom is better than rubies.

2. What Wisdom is and what Wisdom Gives: Verses 12-21. This section may well be looked upon as an introduction to the sublime revelation in verses 22-31. Wisdom is a person and what wisdom gives, the power wisdom has, makes it clear that wisdom is a divine person. Kings and princes rule by that person, as well as the nobles and judges of the earth. The powers that be are ordained by this wisdom. And that person says:

> I love them that love Me
> And those that seek Me early shall find Me.

This wisdom has riches and honor to bestow; has durable riches and righteousness; the fruit of it is better than fine gold; those that love the wisdom will receive an inheritance. In the next place we hear who that person is.

3. Wisdom, the Person; Who He is: Verses 22-31. The Wisdom is the Son of God. The personification of Wisdom is found in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. This wonderful passage is a great prelude to the incarnation and the subsequent redemption work of the Son of God. Here Solomon beheld the highest of all; he had a vision of the Messiah of Israel, the Son of David, whose wisdom, peace and kingdom of peace and glory he but faintly forshadowed. The critical school must of course deny this application to our Lord. "The passage played a great role in subsequent thought, for it lies at the back of much of the speculation of Philo, and at a subsequent period was greatly employed by Christian theologians in support of their doctrine of the person of Christ through their identification of Wisdom in this passage with the Logos (the Word) of the fourth Gospel" (New Century Bible).

Wisdom was possessed by the Lord in the beginning of His ways, before His works of old. But that is the beginning without a beginning. In the beginning was the Word; and because the Word, the Son of God, is God, He like God has no beginning. The word "possessed" has also the meaning of "formed". "This word has been a battleground of controversy since the days of the Arian heresy.

But it is well to remember that, all theological questions apart, it is impossible to understand the word, whatever rendering of it we adopt, as indicating that Wisdom ever had a beginning, or was ever properly speaking created. Wisdom is inseparable from any worthy conception of Him who is "the only wise God" (1 Tim. i:17), and therefore is like Him "from everlasting to everlasting" (Perowne). Wisdom, the Son of God, was always with God from everlasting. Before there ever was anything created, before the mountains were settled, or even the earth had been made, He was. And when creation began He was there. He, the Son, was by Him, as one brought up with Him. From the greater revelation in the New Testament we learn that all things were created not only for Him, but also by Him (Colossians i:20). Wisdom speaks: "And I was continually His delight. Rejoicing always before Him." This can only be true of God the Son. And furthermore He says: "Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delight was with the sons of men." His delight was so great, that He laid by His glory, and left His eternal dwelling place to become man and redeem man by the death of the cross.*

4. **The Renewed Appeal: Verses 32-36.** Then follows the renewed appeal. Wisdom says, "Whosoever findeth me findeth life." How true of our Lord; in Him we find and have life. Note the two "Blessed" in this paragraph.

*"It is interesting to observe that this glimpse, this adumbration of a great truth, which was only to become fully clear in Christ Jesus our Lord, was advanced a little in clearness and completeness by a book which is not considered to be inspired, the so-called Book of Wisdom, in a passage which must be quoted: "For she (i. e., Wisdom) is a breath of the power of God, and a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty; therefore can no defiled thing fall into her. For she is the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God and the image of His goodness. And being but one, she can do all things; and remaining in herself, she maketh all things new; and in all ages entering into holy souls, she maketh them friends of God and prophets. For God loveth none but him that dwelleth with Wisdom. For she is more beautiful than the sun, and above all the order of stars; being compared with the light, she is found before it."

CHAPTER IX.

1. The Invitation of Wisdom. 1-12.
2. The Contrast with Folly. 13-18.

1 **The Invitation of Wisdom: Verses 1-12.** The first section of Proverbs closeth with a contrast of Wisdom and Folly, both personified. The one, our Lord, the other under the symbol of a foolish woman. Wisdom sends forth her invitation, after her house is built and the feast is spread. It reminds us of the parable of the great supper (Luke xiv). Here too is the gracious invitation, "Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine which I have mingled."

2 **The Contrast with folly: Verses 13-18.** Folly too has her house and sitteth in the door on a seat in the high places of the city to call to her victims. She invites to the stolen waters, so sweet to the natural man, to eat bread in secret places, equally pleasant. But what is the end? "The dead are there; . . . her guests are in the depths of hell." The foolish woman is the world with its lusts.

II THE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON. Chapter x-xix:19.

Beginning with the tenth chapter we have the collection of proverbs given by inspiration through Solomon. In this section the personal address, "My son," and the personal exhortations are missing. It will be noticed that each verse in this section contains a proverb, consisting each of two lines, mostly of an antithetic character, except xix:7, which has three lines instead of two (a tristich).

It is impossible to give a detailed analysis of these chapters, nor can we take up each proverb separately for meditation. This must be left to each reader. By comparing Scripture with Scripture, and a prayerful study of these terse sayings, the heavenly wisdom given in these chapters can readily be found. There is no end to practical application. Yet even in these chapters a certain order is maintained. The contrast in each chapter is between the Righteous and the Wicked, between Right and Wrong.

CHAPTER X.

THE GODLY AND THE UNGODLY IN LIFE AND CONDUCT.

The opening proverbs are concerning treasures, earthly substance. What an important sentence, "Treasures of wickedness profit nothing!" Throughout these proverbs there are the warnings concerning getting riches, or as it is expressed in a modern phrase "getting rich quick" (see xxviii:20), and the dangers connected with it.

"These grave warnings of Wisdom are especially needed at the present time in England and America, when the undisguised and the unrestrained pursuit of riches has become more and more recognized as the legitimate end of life, so that few people feel any shame in admitting that this is their aim; and the clear unimpassioned statements of the result, which always follows on the unhallowed passion receive daily confirmation from the occasional revelations of our domestic, our commercial and our criminal life. He that is greedy of gain, we are told, troubleth his own house. An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning, but the end thereof shall not be blessed. A faithful man shall abound with blessings, but he that maketh haste to be rich (and consequently cannot by any possibility be faithful) shall not be unpunished. He that hath an evil eye hasteth after riches, and knoweth not that want shall come upon him. 'Weary not thyself,' therefore, it is said, 'to be rich;' which, though it may be the dictate of thine own wisdom, is really unmixed folly, burdened with a load of calamity for the unfortunate seeker, for his house, and for all those who are in any way dependent upon him."*

There are also warnings against being slack, which maketh poor, while the hand of the diligent, he that is up and doing, maketh rich. We find promises and assurance for the godly like these: "Righteousness delivereth from death . . . the Lord will not suffer the righteous, the soul of the righteous to famish . . . blessings are upon the head of the just . . . the memory of the just is blessed."

The walk and conduct of the two classes are contrasted, especially in relation to the mouth and lips. The walk of the righteous is the sure walk; (9) the mouth of the righteous is a well of life, it is a fountain for good. In this

*Expositor's Bible.

proverb we are reminded of John iv:10 and vii:38, the believer indwelt by the Holy Spirit welling forth waters of life. While violence covers the mouth of the wicked and hatred does nothing but stir up strife, love, the true love in the heart of the just covereth all transgressions. (See 1 Peter iv:8 and James v:20.) Whoever has understanding his lips speak wisdom. In all these proverbs there is something to be learned in a practical way and many blessed lessons are written here for all who desire to walk righteously, godly and soberly in this evil age. Here is a test, for instance, "He is in the way of life that heedeth correction" (17, corrected translation). But as soon as one forsaketh reproof he errs. How well it would be if children of God would daily consider verse 19. "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin, but he that refraineth his lips is wise." The fear of the wicked, the fear of the Lord, the hope of the righteous and the expectations of the wicked are furthermore contrasted in this chapter.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CONTRAST CONTINUED.

The continued contrast in this chapter between the righteous and the wicked contains many precious gems, sweet to faith and wholesome for instruction. In the second verse there is a warning as to pride. Pride and shame are vitally linked together, as is lowliness and wisdom. Lowliness therefore is true wisdom. A Rabbinical comment on this passage says, "Lowly souls are filled with wisdom as the lowly places are filled with water." Again riches are mentioned. They profit nothing in the day of wrath. (See Zephaniah i.) But righteousness delivereth from death (verse 4). What wisdom there is in verse 8, "The righteous is delivered out of trouble, but the wicked cometh in his stead." Even so will it be when the Lord comes and gives rest and deliverance to His own and trouble and wrath to the wicked (2 Thess. i). Verse 19 has been rendered:

"He that is steadfast in righteousness is so unto life,
And he that pursueth evil doeth so unto his own death."

The delight of the Lord, declares the next proverb, is in the way of the upright, who remain steadfast in righteousness.

In verse 30 we read that the fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, not the righteous is a tree of life, but the fruit of the righteous, which means that he gives forth blessing and life to others, and that is here expressed in one sentence, "and he that winneth souls is wise." (See Daniel xii:3.)

CHAPTER XII.

THE CONTRAST IN RELATION TO VARIOUS CONDITIONS.

In these proverbs we have the righteous mentioned, his thoughts, his words, his domestic relationship, his attitude toward animal creation (verse 10); his diligence; all is contrasted with the wicked in these beautiful antithetic expressions of wisdom. The thoughts of the righteous are right (5), because his heart is right; his words bring deliverance (6); in speaking truth he showeth forth righteousness (17); his tongue is health (18); the lip which uttereth truth shall be established for ever (19); he knows nothing of lying lips, but dealing truly he is the Lord's delight (22). All is summed up in one statement, with which the chapter closeth: "In the way of righteousness there is life; in the pathway thereof there is no death." Happy are we if we know this way, which is Christ Himself, and if we follow Him. Verse 21 speaks of the blessing of the righteous, "There shall no evil happen to the just," that is, all things must work together for good.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CONTRAST: ADVANTAGE AND DISADVANTAGE.

The contrast in Proverbs concerning the righteous and the wicked is continued in this chapter, showing mostly the advantage of the righteous, illustrating a statement found in the prophet Isaiah: "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall

be well with him, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings" (Isaiah iii:10). Then the contrast: "Woe unto the wicked! It shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him" (verse 11). The righteous eats good by the fruit of his mouth; the trangressor receives violence. There is fatness for the soul of the diligent and nothing for the soul of the sluggard. Righteousness keepeth; wickedness overthrows. While the light of the righteous rejoiceth, the lamp of the wicked shall be put out. These are some of the contrasts.

In verse 7 is a statement which may be applied to our Lord: "There is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches." He who has all the riches made Himself poor for our sake.

Then there is warning against pride. In fact the proverbs abound in these warnings. "By pride cometh contention" (verse 10). To the proud who refuseth correction cometh poverty and shame (verse 18).

CHAPTER XIV.

THE WISE AND THE FOOLISH: THE RICH AND THE POOR.

The contrast now concerns the wise and the foolish, the rich and the poor. Let us see some of these contrasts. "In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride, but the lips of the wise shall preserve them" (verse 3). The foolish shoots forth his foolishness like a branch. Separation from the foolish man is commanded in the seventh verse The wise cannot have fellowship with the foolish, as the believer is not to be yoked to the unbeliever. Fools make a mock at sin (verse 9). The word "sin" in the original means "trespass offering." That is exactly what the foolish man does, including the religious fool; he denies both sin and the blessed provision God has made to deliver from the guilt and power of sin. But among the righteous, says the next line, there is favor (acceptance). Because the righteous owns himself a sinner, judgeth himself and accepts God's redemption through the one sacrifice.

How true it is "the heart knoweth his own bitterness, and a stranger does not intermeddle with its joy" (verse 10). We can tell our troubles and sorrows to others, but the bitterness of the heart cannot be revealed, but it is known to One who is touched with our sorrows and the bitterness of life through which we pass, for He Himself passed through it also.

Here is another deep saying, which shows that behind this wisdom uttered by the wise king, there is another who knows all what is going on in human life and in the heart. "Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness" (verse 13). How often the sorrowful, the downcast covers all with forced laughter and no one suspects that underneath the mirth there is heaviness. This is true of the children of the world, the foolish who reject true wisdom and know not the Lord Jesus Christ.

Of the poor and the rich we read that the poor is hated; the rich has many friends (verse 20). He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth His Maker; but he that honoreth Him hath mercy on the poor" (verse 31). To deal kindly with the poor and the lowly is God-like. The righteous will manifest his righteousness in a practical way by considering the poor.

Precious are two other proverbs in this chapter.

> "In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence;
> And His children shall have a place of refuge.
> The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life,
> To depart from the snares of death"—Verses 26-27.

CHAPTER XV.

THE BETTER THINGS.

One can read through the proverbs recorded in this chapter and ask the question, What are the better things?

A soft answer which turneth away wrath is better than grievous words (verse 1). The tongue of the righteous which useth knowledge aright is better than the mouth of fools (verse 2). Better is the prayer of the upright than the sacrifice of the wicked (verse 8). Better is he that

followeth after righteousness than the way of the wicked, for the one the Lord delights in, the other is an abomination (verse 9). Better is the heart that seeketh knowledge than to feed on foolishness (verse 14). Better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith (verse 16). This fits many in our own days. Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith (verse 17). Better it is to be slow to anger than wrathful (verse 18). Better is the plain way of the righteous than the thorny way of the slothful (verse 19). Better is to hear reproof than to refuse it (verse 32).

Some other deep sayings are found in this chapter. For instance in verse 11.

> "Sheol and destruction* are before the Lord,
> How much more then the hearts of the children of men."

All is known to the Lord. The unseen world as well as the future; all eternity is known to Him. All is naked and open before Him. He knoweth the hearts of men, yea even our thoughts afar off, before they ever pass through our finite minds.

Twice prayer is mentioned in this chapter, in verse 8 and 29. Not alone does the Lord delight in the prayer of the upright, but He also heareth them. "The Lord is far from the wicked, but He heareth the prayer of the righteous."

CHAPTER XVI.

IN THE LIGHT OF THE LORD.

The name Jehovah (Lord) appears eleven times in this chapter of proverbs. The Lord has the final word, for to man belong the preparations (or plans) of the heart; but from the Lord is the answer of the tongue. It is the same thought as in our English proverb—"Man proposes—God disposes." Man loves to justify himself, his ways are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits; He is the judge of ways and motives. Our works are to be committed

*Destruction, Abaddon, used in Revelation ix:11.

(literal: rolled upon) unto the Lord, then establishment and blessing will follow. It is strange that these three verses were omitted in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament.

The Lord hath made all things for Himself, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil (verse 4). Much error has been taught in connection with this verse. Some have taught that God made some wicked. It is not said that God makes a man wicked, for "He made man upright" (Eccles. vii:29), but being wicked by his own choice he comes under the irrevocable law which dooms him to "the day of evil," of calamity and punishment. By this, the Apostle teaches us, even in its final and most awful form, is revealed not the arbitrary predestination, but "the righteous judgment of God" (Romans ii:5-11).*

The abomination to the Lord is to be proud in heart. Pride, not only pride as it works out in deeds, but pride as nourished in the heart, seen by the eyes of the Lord alone, is equally an abomination to Him. How much there is in these days! The second stanza of this proverb speaks of joining hand in hand, or hand to hand. It is the much praised "team-work," confederation, alliance, etc., to do a big work and make a big name. Much of this attempt of doing "big things" in the day of "small things" has its source in the pride of the natural man.

In the sixth proverb of this chapter we have a Gospel text. The word mercy is literally "grace." The word "purged" is the word translated elsewhere by "covered" or "atoned." In the Lord Jesus Christ and His work is revealed "grace and truth" and by His work so blessedly finished on the cross our inquity is covered. Then comes the fear of the Lord which results in departing from evil.

If a man walks in righteousness, in true humility, if he pleaseth the Lord, then his enemies will be silenced and not talk against him. Only too often the charges brought

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*Perowne.

against the children of God by the enemies of truth, are the result of not walking in the truth.

Comforting to faith is the ninth verse. We may devise, plan, and often worry as we make our plans but behind it stands the Lord and in spite of our failures and mistakes "He directeth" the steps of the righteous.

Twice more the name of the Lord is given in this chapter. "And whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he" (verse 20). The only true happiness is to know the Lord, to trust Him and to follow Him. Inasmuch as we may increase in knowledge of Him, in confidence and in practical obedience our happiness is an increasing happiness. In the last verse we read that the disposing of the lot is of the Lord. The lot was used in the Old Testament. It is mentioned but once in the New Testament, preceding the day of Pentecost (Acts i:26).

After the Holy Spirit came to guide and direct no lot is needed any longer. We pass over the many other blessed instructions recorded in this chapter. Private meditation and prayer unlocks the many riches deposited in them.

CHAPTER XVII.
DIVERSE PROVERBS.

Of the twenty-eight proverbs found in this chapter we point out but a few. "The fining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold; but the Lord trieth the hearts" (verse 3). Man may try silver and gold, but God only the hearts. And He tries the hearts by the refining process, trials and afflictions, the process which rests in His own hands. (See Psalm lxvi: 10-12; Mal. iii:3-4; 1 Peter i:7.)

"He that covereth a transgression seeketh love, but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends" (verse 9). To cover a transgression does not mean to ignore sin. How he who has sinned and is in transgression is to be death with is given to us in Galatians vi:1-5. To act in the spirit of love towards one who has sinned is Christ-like. To repeat the matter, gossip about it, harp on the shortcomings and failure, is Satan-like, for he is the accuser of the brethren.

"A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity" (verse 17). This is beautifully illustrated in the case of David and Jonathan (1 Sam. xviii-xx). And the great Friend, the brother born for adversity, is the Lord Jesus Christ. He loveth at all times; His love is limitless and timeless. It is the love which passeth knowledge.

CHAPTER XVIII.

PROVERBS OF PERSONAL INSTRUCTION.

There is first a warning against separation produced by desire, that is for gratification and pleasure, and not for a righteous purpose. Such a one becomes an enemy of true wisdom and one who intermeddleth with all wisdom. This proverb finds a New Testament illustration in Alexander the coppersmith, as well as Hymenaeus and Philetus, and Diotrephes of whom John writes in his epistle. A fool foams out his own folly. This proverb in verse 2 is illustrated by many of the critics of the Bible. They have no delight in true understanding but their own hearts are laid bare by their mad oppositions to God's Holy Word.

The fool's mouth, his lips, the talebearer (whisperer), and the slothful are the themes of the proverbs in verses 6-9. Then we read "The Name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe" (verse 10). The Name (Ha-Shem, in Hebrew) stands for Jehovah Himself. He is the place of refuge, of shelter, protection and safety for all who in faith turn to Him. In Him is our peace and safety. The Hebrew meaning of "is safe" is "set on high." Even so if we flee to Him and become His, we are exalted in Him, seated in Christ in heavenly places.

Another proverb of solemn meaning is found in verse 12. "Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honor is humility." Scripture abounds in illustrations of these two lines. The truth stated here is still being manifested in the lives of men and women. The only place of safety for God's people is the place in the dust, the place of humility.

"Death and Life are in the power of the tongue; and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof" (verse 21). The Epistle of James (chapter iii) speaks in the same manner of the power of the tongue and its misuse. Evil words will bring evil results. But the tongue speaking the words of life and love, as given in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, is a power for good, the power of life—and oh! what shall the harvest be in that day!

CHAPTER XIX:1-19.

FURTHER PROVERBS ON PERSONAL INSTRUCTION.

One may be poor, but walking in integrity, he is far ahead of him who is perverse in his lips and is a fool. Then we find proverbs about fretting against the Lord; warning against false witness and speaking lies and other matters. We call special attention to verse 12.

> "The King's wrath is as the roaring of a lion,
> But his favour is as dew upon the grass."

It may be applied to Him who is The Lamb of God and also the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Some day He will roar in His displeasure and manifest the wrath, so well deserved by the world. But even then His grace will be revealed, for in wrath He will remember mercy, the mercy promised to Israel. "I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth its roots as Lebanon" (Hosea xiv:5).

We then read of a foolish son, a contentious wife, concerning houses and riches, a prudent wife. There is a warning against slothfulness, and exhortation to keep the commandments and to pity the poor, for giving to the poor means lending to the Lord. The son is to be chastened as long as their is hope and a warning against sinful wrath. This verse marks the end of this section of proverbs.

III. INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN TO SOLOMON. Chapter xix:20-xxiv.

CHAPTER XIX:20-29.

Beginning with the twentieth verse of chapter xix the personal address begins again and we read repeatedly the phrase "My son" up to the twenty-fifth chapter. This section corresponds therefore with the first nine chapters, containing the instructions which Solomon received from the Lord and which he records in these chapters.

Once more there is the call, like in the opening chapters, to hear, to give attention. "Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in **thy latter end.**" The Lord knew beforehand what "the latter end" of Solomon would be. The wise man who warned against the fool, the backslider, the unjust and the man who forsakes counsel and the Lord, himself illustrates the truths given in these proverbs by turning away from the Lord. Alas! he did not hear counsel, and therefore instead of being wise in his latter days he became a fool. The truth expressed in verse 22 was Solomon's portion as long as the fear of the Lord governed his conduct. He was satisfied, had peace and prosperity; but when he no longer feared the Lord, evil came upon his kingdom and it was divided. "Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou has not kept my covenant and my statutes which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant" (1 Kings xi:11).

CHAPTER XX.

PROVERBS AS TO PERSONAL CONDUCT.

Proverbs of warning and instructions as to personal conduct are found mostly in this chapter; a number of them are of special interest if applied to Solomon. The first one is concerning wine and strong drink. As the use of wine among the people of Israel was legitimate the warning

is against intemperance (Deut. xiv:26). The Bible gives many illustrations of the truth of this proverb-warning. We may think of Noah, Lot, Nabal, Ben-hadad, Belshazzar and others.

From all the good things we select the following. In verse 3 is instruction which makes for peace. It is the fool who meddles and thus produceth strife, but it is an honor for man to cease from strife. In verse 13 we find a warning against self indulgence. In verse 19 the talebearer and flatterer is mentioned. The sin of flattery should be avoided by all the godly for it nourisheth pride and works nothing but evil.

"Many great and noble men have been ruined by admiration and popularity, who might have thriven, growing greater and nobler, in the fiercest and most relentless criticism. Donatello, the great Florentine sculptor, went at one time of his life to Padua, where he was received with the utmost enthusiasm, and loaded with approbation and honors. But soon he declared his intention of returning to Florence, on the ground that the sharp assaults and the cutting criticisms which always assailed him in his native city were much more favorable to his art than the atmosphere of admiration and eulogy. In this way he thought that he would be stimulated to greater efforts, and ultimately attain to a surer reputation."

Verse 22 gives another beautiful instruction. "Say not, I will recompense evil; but wait on the Lord, and He shall save thee." To put everything in the hands of the Lord, to trust Him and wait for His own time, that is true wisdom. But it is a lesson hard to learn. The twelfth chapter of Romans gives the same instruction. "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, vengeance is mine; I will repay saith, the Lord." Also 1 Thess. v:15: "See that none render evil for evil;" and 1 Peter iii:9; "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing." How blessed it is to wait on the Lord, to bide His own time, and in waiting to know that He does all things well. Thrice in this chapter the king is mentioned: in verses 2, 26 and 28. These verses may be applied to Him, who is greater than Solomon, the King of kings and the Lord of lords. When He comes again He

will deal with the lawless and with His enemies, but His throne is not only a judgment throne, but it is also upheld by mercy.

CHAPTER XXI.

PERSONAL INSTRUCTIONS AS TO LIFE AND CONDUCT.

In the proverbs of this chapter the Lord is mentioned five times. The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord as the rivers of water; He turneth it whithersoever He will" (verse 1). The rivers of water are "water-courses," the irrigation system known to the ancients, opening and shutting sluices directed the flow of the waters. Thus the Lord governs the king's heart as He directs the affairs of men. The Lord pondereth the hearts (verse 2). The same truth is stated in chapter xvi:2; self-justification suits the natural man but the Lord testeth all hearts. How well it is to remember in all our conduct, that truth, so comforting to the believer, expressed by Peter, "Thou knoweth all things." More acceptable than sacrifice to the Lord, is to do righteousness and judgment (verse 3). This may be compared with 1 Sam. xv:22, Hosea vi:6; Micah vi:6-8. The words of our Lord in the Gospel of Matthew give the same truth. "But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice" (Matt. ix:13). At the close of the chapter two additional statements are made concerning the Lord; "There is no wisdom nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord" (verse 30). No matter how man may plan, how cunning the enemy may be, it will all come to naught, for the Lord is above all. How well Eliphaz the Temanite expressed this truth when he said: "He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise. He taketh the wise in their craftiness; and the counsel of the forward is carried headlong" (Job v:12-13). Safety is not by the horse prepared against the day of battle, nor by might or by power, but safety is of the Lord (verse 31). How well then to look away from man and

look to the Lord and to know in Him is our safety. The other proverbs in this chapter giving direction as to life and conduct, warning against the high look and the proud heart, getting of treasures by a lying tongue, against heartlessness in refusing to hear the cry of the poor, against loving pleasure and luxurious living, against coveteousness and other matters do not need further annotations.

CHAPTER XXII.

INSTRUCTIONS CONTINUED.

Better than great riches, better than silver and gold is a name and loving favor. If a person has riches and a bad name and is not well thought of, he is less honorable than the poor man who has a name and good reputation. In Ecclesiastes, Solomon says: "A good name is better than precious ointment" (Eccles. vii:1). The third verse has a wise message: "The prudent man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and suffer for it." The Lord has revealed in His Word the evil which is in store for the sinner and the impenitent. He also has prepared a hiding place, an ark of safety, in His Son, our Lord. The prudent believeth the Word and flees to the refuge; the simple, the unbelieving, pass on and suffer for it when the evil comes. Humility and the fear of the Lord has a reward, while thorns and snares are in the way of the froward. sowing and reaping is found in verses 8 and 9. He that soweth iniquity reaps vanity, or calamity; he that has a bountiful eye, who looks upon the poor and needy with kindness and supplies their wants reaps blessing.

In verse 11 we read, "He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend." In such, whose hearts are pure and whose words are gracious, the Lord, the King, delights.

Beginning with verse 17 we find another call to hear, and to apply the heart to His knowledge: "For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee, they shall withal be fitted in thy lips. That thy trust may be in the

Lord, I have made known to thee this day, even to thee." This is the personal message to Solomon by the Lord, heeded by him for many years and finally disobeyed.

The proverb of verse 28: "Remove not the ancient landmarks, which thy father has set," is a restatement of Deut. xix:14. It is repeated in chapter xxiii-10. In Job xxiv:2 we read "Some remove the landmarks." These landmarks were for Israel sacred things, for their possessions were staked off according to the Lord's will; to meddle with them was a transgression. While Israel, God's earthly people, had landmarks, God's heavenly people also has landmarks of the heavenly realm, the blessed doctrines of the Word of God, which constitute the faith once and for all delivered unto the Saints. And how man removes these landmarks in our day! How true it is, "Some remove the landmarks," that which our fathers cherished, believed and trusted in. The rationalist, the ritualist and the delusionist does it constantly and thus destroys the foundation upon which everything rests.

CHAPTER XXIII.

INSTRUCTIONS CONTINUED.

The opening proverbs of this chapter treat of self-restraint in curbing the appetite and gives manners to be observed in the presence of a superior. Warnings against riches and their uncertainty are contained in verses 4 and 5. How well it would be if the great mass of professing Christians, and some true believers also, would consider this instruction: "Labor not to be rich." But this exhortation as well as the exhortation in 1 Timothy vi:6-10 is overlooked, and many who profess to have their riches in Christ, in the heavenly places and never ending glory, weary themselves with earthly gain, and aim to become wealthy. But riches have wings; they can fly away swiftly as does the eagle when he mounts heavenward. This too is mentioned in the epistle to Timothy, in which those who are rich are charged not to be highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches,

but to be rich in good works. The evil eye mentioned in verse 6 has nothing to do with the superstitious belief that some person with an evil eye can cast a spell to harm others. It means a dishonest, insincere person, one who is pharisaical. While he urges to eat and drink, puts on a friendly front, in his heart he entertains other thoughts.

Not to envy sinners is commanded in verse 17; one who walks in fear of the Lord all the day long looks to their end, though they may prosper now, their prosperity will end, but the expectation of him who fears the Lord will not be cut off.

Beginning with verse 22 is another call to hearken. Parents are to be obeyed. The truth is to be bought and never to be sold, as well as wisdom, instruction and understanding. There is a price often to be paid for the possession of the Truth. Some have suffered even unto death to possess the Truth, and in its defense. Then in verse 26 is the familiar exhortation, "My Son, give me thy heart, and let thine eyes delight in my ways." This word is often misused when applied to sinners, the unsaved. It is addressed to a son. The Gospel does not come to the sinner with the exhortation "Give"; the sinner has nothing to give. The Gospel comes with an offer and if the offer of free grace is accepted, the believing sinner becomes a child of God, a son of God and an heir. Such a one is to yield his whole heart to the Lord, and his eyes are to delight in His ways. Thus Jehovah spoke to Solomon. The chapter ends with proverbs relating to self-indulgence, the sin of intemperance and all that goes with it.

CHAPTER XXIV.

INSTRUCTIONS CONTINUED.

In the final instructions of this chapter we find first a description of the evil men. Their heart studieth destruction; their lips talk mischief. This theme is repeatedly referred to in this chapter. In verse 15 the evil man is addressed not to lay wait for the righteous and not to spoil his resting place. The Lord takes care of the righteous;

he may be overcome by misfortunes seven times, yet will he rise again. Different it is with the wicked when he falls into mischief. Yet there must be no rejoicing over the fall of the enemy, nor gladness when he stumbleth. This displeaseth the Lord. Still higher is the command of the New Testament, "Love your enemies; . . recompense no man evil for evil; . . overcome evil with good." There is to be no fretting because of evil men nor envy (verses 1 and 19). Why should the righteous be envious at the wicked in their prosperity? The thirty-seventh Psalm enters more fully into this; but here the same answer is given in a terse way. The wicked have no reward; their candle will be put out. Their calamity riseth suddenly, and who knoweth the ruin of them both? which means that the Lord and the king, will deal with the wicked. Another proverb of this chapter we mention: "If thou faint in the day of adversity thy strength is small" (verse 10). The hour of trial is the hour which brings the test. When adversity brings despondency, and even worse, murmuring, it is an evidence that the heart does not fully trust the Lord.

The last section of this chapter is introduced by the statement, "These things also belong to the wise," or as it may be rendered, "These also are sayings of the wise." The chapter ends with a vivid description of the slothful. His field and vineyard bear witness to his character. They are grown over with thorns and covered with nettles and the stone wall is broken down. And why all this? "Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands in sleep." An illustration of this sluggard can be found a thousand times over again in our own land.

IV. THE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON COLLECTED BY THE MEN OF HEZEKIAH.

Chapters xxv and xxvi.

CHAPTER XXV.

Here begin the proverbs which the good king Hezekiah,

under the guidance of the Spirit of God, added to this book. "This title is interesting as affording a proof that a revival of literary activity accompanied the revival of religion and of national prosperity which marked the reign of Hezekiah. The men of Hezekiah were doubtless a body of scribes engaged under the direction of the king in literary labors."

Very fittingly the opening verses of this collected portion of proverbs relate to the king. While it is the glory of God to conceal a thing, the glory of kings is to search out a matter. God has many things concealed as to Himself, the great universe, creation and His ways in Providence; but kings should inquire diligently into the matters brought before them and search them out in their administration of justice. Some day the great King who is coming, the King of kings, who knows all the secrets of God as well as the hearts of men, will search out all things and bring the hidden things to light. When that day comes the fifth verse will see its accomplishment.

> "Take away the wicked from before the king—
> And His throne shall be established in righteousness."

When He comes to establish His throne of righteousness, to rule as the true Mechisedek, the King of Righteousness and of Peace, the wicked and evildoers will be taken away in judgment. Only then can there be a righteous government. Verses 6 and 7 remind us of the parable of the great supper spoken by our Lord in Luke xiv.

Verses 21 and 22 are quoted by the Holy Spirit in the Epistle to the Romans (xii:21). And that is followed by another saying as to the conduct of the righteous man. "The north wind driveth away rain; so does an angry countenance, a backbiting tongue." The backbiter does the work of Satan and the Lord hates the slandering tongue as He hates the flattering tongue. The believer can show an angry countenance, without sinning, and cut short the pernicious work of the backbiter (Ephesians iv:26). Verse 28 gives a good definition of true self-control, the rule over one's own spirit.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CONCERNING THE FOOL AND THE SLUGGARD.

Eleven times we meet the word fool in this chapter. Three different words are used in the Hebrew for fool. The first is **"Avil"** which signifies weakness. The second word **"Kesil"** occurs nearly fifty times, means fat or dense. The third word is the Hebrew **"Nabal,"** which is derived from the verb to fade, or to wither; it means a vulgar, bad man who has given himself over to wickedness. The natural man in his condition, his darkened mind, his sinfulness answers to much that is said about the fool in this book. As snow in summer and rain at harvest time are quite impossible in Palestine, so is honor for a fool. A fool may utter a curse, as they often do, and wish something evil, but being causeless, it will not be fulfilled. The fool needs correction, the stripes for his back; he deserves no answer, and if he is answered it must be according to his folly. The foolish questions mentioned in the New Testament may well be considered here (Titus iii:9). The tenth verse is doubtful in its translation. A better suggested rendering is the following:

> "A master workman formeth all himself aright,
> But he that hireth a fool hireth a transgressor."

That is, a master does everything right; a fool spoils everything. The eleventh verse is quoted in 2 Peter ii:22. The Apostle applies it to the outward professor of Christianity who turns back to the world after a period of profession and reformation. The true child of God is never described as a dog, nor could the other sentence in Peter's Epistle mean a true believer. "The sow that was washed turned to her own wallowing in the mire." A hog may be washed, yet in spite of the washing he is still a hog. So a sinner may profess salvation yet may never have been born again, and after a brief period of profession turn again to his old sins and habits.

The slothful man, the man that deceiveth his neighbor,

the talebearer, the contentious man, the lying tongue and the flattering mouth, furnish other proverbs. How true it is "A flattering mouth worketh ruin." Every godly man and woman should hate and avoid flattery.

V. INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN TO SOLOMON.

Chapters xxvii-xxix.

In the three chapters which follow we find the change we have noticed before. These proverbs are addressed to a person and the phrases "My son" and the personal address, "thou," "thy" and "thyself," are again used in these chapters. Like the previous sections, so here we find instructions which were given to Solomon.

CHAPTER XXVII.

INSTRUCTIONS AND WARNINGS.

The opening proverb warns against procrastination. No one can be sure of what the next day may bring forth. True wisdom is not to trust the future day, for it may never come, nor are we to dwell in the past. While it is to-day we must live and act and leave nothing undone which can be done to-day. How true this is of salvation which is offered for to-day—now is the day of salvation. How many have been lost forever by procrastination, by thinking a more convenient time would come. Well has one said, "The thief which cheats us of our days and beggars us of our wealth is the specious thought that tomorrow belongs to us." The illusion is as old as the world, but is today as fresh and powerful as ever. James iv:13-14 gives the same lesson. In the second verse we find a warning as to self-praise. Self-praise is one of the worst forms of pride, that pride which another proverb states (xvi:18-19) "goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

"Open rebuke is better than secret love" and "faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful" (verses 5-6). A wise man welcomes open criticism

and rebuke, though such rebuke may wound, yet being given by the faithfulness of a friend, it is far better than the deceitful kisses of a flattering enemy. The 14th verse may be linked with these statements. "He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice rising early in the morning, it shall be counted a curse unto him." Insincerity lurks behind such loud, pharisaical protestrations of friendship.

A great truth is given in verse 19: "As in water face answereth face, so the heart of man to man." The still pool of water was man's first mirror. Gazing in it the face is reflected. As truly as the face seen in the pool is like the face which the water reflects, so truly does one man's heart reflect the other's. Though there may be culture, education and a certain refinement, underneath each human being there is the same corrupt, fallen human nature.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

WARNINGS AND INSTRUCTIONS CONTINUED.

The wicked is a coward; the righteous man, because he trusteth in the Lord and knows the Lord is on his side, is as bold as a lion. It is the conscience which makes a coward of the wicked man.

This chapter has many sharp contrasts and important warnings and exhortations. We point out a few. Those who forsake the law, turn their backs upon the revelation of God, refuse obedience to Him, praise the wicked, they make common cause with them. Those who keep the law, obey God's Word, are contenders for the faith (verse 4). Evil men are blind, but with seeking the Lord comes understanding, the blind eyes are opened (verse 5). A wise son is he who keepeth the law; such was Solomon till he plunged into apostasy and darkness (verse 7). Then in the ninth verse is another pithy saying. He "that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." It is the same truth as stated in Psalm lxvi:18, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."

An important message is contained in verse 13. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Every attempt to cover up sin is a failure. How much of this is done today, not merely the covering of individual sins, but the denial of sin itself. The modern theology useth much ingenious argumentation which tries to make out of sin something else; speaks of it as a mere defect, as if it were some kind of a taint in the blood, a hereditary and therefore unavoidable weakness, something for which man is not responsible. All these inventions, which sweep aside the declarations of the infallible Word of God, are "covering up." No mercy can there be for those who deny sin and sins. The fig leaves must be torn away with which man still tries to cover his nakedness. There must be confession, repentance, self-judgment and then of course trust in Him who died for the ungodly. The next proverb (verse 14) contains a beatitude. "Happy"—or "Blessed"—"is the man that feareth always." He who has found forgiveness is sheltered by the precious blood, walks in newness of life and in godly fear all the day long.

We mention verses 25 and 26: "Trust in the Lord brings blessing; and he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool."

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE FINAL INSTRUCTIONS.

These final instructions given in proverbs cover the similar ground as those in the previous chapters. Wisdom shines out in each, and the contents of every proverb shows that the author is not Solomon but He who is perfect in knowledge. "He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." Scripture abounds with examples of cases of hardening the neck and the heart, like Pharaoh, Ahab and others. This proverb will be finally proven to be the truth when an ungodly age will end with judgment for those who were often reproved and continue in sin.

Once more the sin of flattery is mentioned. "A man that flattereth his neighbor spreadeth a net for his feet" (verse 5). Flattery is akin to lying and can never be right, but is always a mistake, which results in the gravest consequences. More servants of the Lord have been spoiled by flattery than in any other manner. It is literally, as this proverb says, "spreading a net for his feet."

In verse 23 we read, "A man's pride shall bring him low, but honor shall uphold the humble in spirit." It should be connected with the proverb in chapter xxvi:12, "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceits? There is more hope of a fool than of him." Pride always brings low; humility always brings up. The highest place is the lowest place. "The fear of man bringeth a snare; but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe" (verse 25). The fear of man is born of unbelief. The Christian who fears man shows clearly that he is not looking to the Lord, but to man. The fear of man surely bringeth a snare, it leads to men pleasing and men praising. And because one seeks the honor which comes from man and not the honor which cometh from God only, man, his approval or disapproval, is feared. The fear of man is as dangerous, as subtle and as un-christianlike as flattery, talebearing, backbiting, whispering and the other evil things mentioned in these proverbs.

This chapter concludes the proverbs of Solomon. As we have seen, the instructions which he received, first from the Lord, and the instructions which were given such which were for his conduct and life, for guidance and direction, and the proverbs which were revealed to him to give to others. We express once more the belief that every true Christian should devote more attention to these God-given instructions. How much there is in all of them for all classes of believers!

VI. THE WORDS OF AGUR THE SON OF JAKEH.

Chapter xxx.

Some hold that Agur is another name for Solomon. This

opinion is also upheld by the Talmud, which speaks of six names which belonged to the King: Solomon, Jedidiah, Koheleth, Son of Jakeh, Agur and Lemuel. But this opinion cannot be verified, nor do we know who Agur the son of Jakeh was. The Septuagint and the Vulgate have translated the Hebrew words and formed a sentence out of them. "Agur" means "assembler" and Jakeh has the meaning of "pious," so that some think that Agur means an unknown godly man who gathered these sayings and they were embodied in this book. We leave the name as it is, and believe that Agur, the son of Jakeh, is the name of the author of this chapter. "Whoever Agur was, he had a certain marked individuality; he combines meditation on lofty questions of theology with a sound theory of practical life. He was able to give valuable admonitions about conduct. But his characteristic delight was "to group together in quatrains visible illustrations of selected qualities or ideas" (R. F. Horton). The opening verse also tells us that he spoke to Ithiel (God with me) and Ucal (I shall be able). The Revised Version has a marginal reading instead of the two names Ithiel and Ucal: "I have wearied myself, O God. I have wearied myself O God, and am consumed." We do not adopt this.

The structure of the chapter itself is different from the other chapters in this book. It begins with a prologue, containing his confession, in which he shows a spirit of deep abasement and acknowledgment of his own ignorance (verses 2-3).

This is followed by five questions concerning creation and the Creator and His Son (verse 4).

The questions are answered by God's revelation. This is indicated in the next two verses (5 and 6).

Next comes a prayer by Agur the son of Jakeh (verses 7-9).

One proverb follows next in the tenth verse. After that come the so-called "quatrains," six groups of proverbs each consisting of four things. Between the second and third group a single proverb is inserted (verse 17) and at the close of the chapter stands another proverb.

In the prologue he takes the low place, and in his confession manifests the deepest humility, with no taint of pride, thus illustrating the true humility enjoined in the proverbs of Solomon. Because he confessed that he had no understanding nor knowledge of the holy, the Lord gave him all what he lacked.

The questions he asks are concerning the Creator. "Who is He that hath ascended up into heaven and descended? Who hath gathered the wind in His fists? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is His Name, and what is His Son's Name, if thou canst tell?" He knows there is a Creator. He cannot question the eternal power and Godhead, which alone can account for this ordered universe. He has not, like many thinkers, ancient and modern, dropped a plummet down the broad deep universe, and cried, No God. He knows there is a God; there must be an intelligence abled to conceive, coupled with power able to release this mighty mechanism. But Who is it? What is His Name or His Son's Name? Here are the footsteps of the Creator; but where is the Creator Himself?"* By searching God cannot be found out; the fullest answer is given in the New Testament. We are reminded of John iii:13. We know Him who has ascended, because He descended from heaven; Who is the Lord and Creator of all, now in God's presence as the glorified man, and some day He who ascended into heaven will descend again.

That in the next place the Word of God is mentioned, that is the written revelation of God, is not without meaning. Man needs this revelation to know the Lord, and have the question answered which human speculation and scientific research can never answer. On account of the statement "add thou not unto His words" critics have surmised that the canon of the Old Testament must have been completed when this chapter was written. They have put the date long after the exile. But such a conclusion is unwarranted.

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*Expositor's Bible.

God had commanded long before that nothing should be added to His words (Deut. iv:2). The prayer of Agur in verses 7-9 is closely linked with the foregoing verses. He prays for deliverance from vanity and lies, that he may have a true and honest heart, so necessary for the reception. of the truth of God; then he prays to have neither poverty nor riches. Poverty might induce to steal and take the name of God in vain, then His Word would be rejected by him; and riches would mean the same, as it might lead him to say, Who is the Lord?

The proverb in the form of a command in verse 10 is isolated from the trend of thought in this chapter. The first quatrain comes next in verses 11-14. Four times the word generation is used, describing the classes of people frequently mentioned in the preceding chapters of proverbs. Then follow four things which are insatiable. The climax is reached gradually. The horseleach (or vampire) has two daughters by name of "Give." Even so is the poor heart of man; and there are three and four things of the same character; the unseen regions into which disembodied spirits are going day after day, year after year; the barren womb; the earth upon which rain descends yet is never filled with water, and the fourth thing, the fire, which never saith, it is enough, which consumes till nothing is left. These unsatiable things mentioned are symbolical of the condition of the natural man, always taking in yet always, restless and never satisfied.

Then there are four things inscrutable: The way of the eagle in the air; the way of the serpent on a rock; the way of a ship in the midst of the ocean; and the way of a man with a maid (verses 18-20).

Four disquieting things are given in verses 21-23. In verses 24-28 the four little things, yet wise are pictured. They are the ants, the conies, the locusts and the lizard (not spider as in the A. V.). Here are lesssons for man: the sluggard, the fool, the evil man, and other characters touched upon in proverbs are put to shame by the sagacity of these little things. Four graceful things conclude

these sayings: A lion, a greyhound, an he-goat and a king, against whom there is no rising up. So may the righteous man act. Bold as a lion, swift as the greyhound to carry out the Lord's will in the Lord's service, climbing the steeps like the he-goat, and always victorious like a king undefeated. We see that these statements of Agur have a definite bearing upon the entire Book of Proverbs inasmuch as they restate and illustrate the different characters, such as the ungodly, the unwise, the fool, the sluggard, the proud, the righteous, the godly, the humble, etc., mentioned in the book. Agur's message ends with a word of counsel to exercise self-restraint.

VII. THE WORDS OF KING LEMUEL TAUGHT HIM BY HIS MOTHER.

THE VIRTUOUS WOMAN.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"The words of King Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him"; this is the superscription of this chapter. Who is King Lemuel? No king by that name is known. We do not hesitate in saying that it is Solomon. It means "unto God" one who is devoted to the Lord. In all probability Solomon's mother called her boy by this name, and here is the record therefore of the instruction given by Solomon's mother. The warning is once more, and that very earnestly (shown by the thrice asked "what?" What shall I say unto you?) against licentiousness, against wine and strong drink. The brief words of the mother's exhortation end with a request to act righteously as king, to stand up for those who are appointed to destruction, to plead the cause of the poor and needy.

The final portion of the book of proverbs is a description of the virtuous woman. This section is quite different from the rest of the book, like many Psalms and the Lamentations it is alphabetically arranged. The virtuous woman, who is far more valuable than rubies, is described in her

home as a faithful wife, a painstaking mother and the competent mistress of her household. There is no need to allegorize this description and apply it to the church, as some have done. But this virtuous woman stands out in prominent and bright relief—a relief against the descriptions of "the strange woman," the adulteress so repeatedly mentioned in Proverbs (ii:16-20; v:1-23; vii:xxii:14; xxiii:27, etc.). One of the proverbs is expanded in this beautiful picture drawn by the Spirit of God: "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor from the Lord." But how few of the modern women reach this ideal! How few among Christian women measure up to it!

Thus ends the book of Proverbs, the book filled with practical instructions, warnings; food for thought and meditation; filled with wholesome counsel, with direction and guidance, the wisdom which is from above.

ECCLESIASTES

Ecclesiastes

Introduction.

The Book of Ecclesiastes has difficulties which have puzzled both the expositor and the reader. We do not mean the question of authorship so much as the contents. It has been branded as pessimism, and not a few have declared that it is unworthy of the Holy Spirit and should never have been added to the other books of the Bible. In spite of all these perplexities connected with the book and hasty judgments, it has a definite place in the organism of the Holy Scriptures, and without this book the revelation of God would be incomplete.

The title the book bears in our English translation comes from the Septuagint, and is an attempted translation of the Hebrew word "**Koheleth**", which Luther in the German version translated with "Preacher" (**Prediger**); it is thus translated in the King James version in the opening verse of the book—"The words of the preacher." But the Hebrew word Koheleth can hardly mean preacher. It is derived from the verb "kahal" which means "to gather" or "assemble." The word "kahal" has been translated "congregation," or as the Greek of the Septuagint translates it "ecclesia." Koheleth is feminine, evidently a word specially provided, and it has been suggested that this was done to correspond to "Wisdom" in Proverbs, which is also in the feminine gender (Prov. i:20). Perhaps the word "debater" comes nearest to the meaning of the original. The word Kohleth is found nowhere else in the Bible; but in Ecclesiastes it occurs seven times, three times in the beginning, once in the middle and three times at the end of the book.

The Authorship and Date.

Both Jewish and Christian tradition ascribe this book to King Solomon. The book itself does not leave us in doubt about it. Chapter i:12-16 is conclusive. If this is disputed, as it is almost universally among rationalistic critics, and also by some who are not rationalists, we may well ask the question who wrote Ecclesiastes? The higher Critic is unable to give a satisfactory answer. They give the date of the book and its composition about 230-250 B. C. The book itself shows that this is impossible, for the author of it lived at a time when Israel had reached the zenith of prosperity and glory. That time was during Solomon's reign. If Solomon was not the author, then another person living during the reign of Solomon must have written the book. But everything shows that only Solomon could have been the author fit and fitted to write this book.

As already stated Jewish teachers and Christian teachers give decisive testimony for the Solomonic authorship. In a Jewish Commentary on Ecclesiastes (Midrash Kohcleth) which was written almost 1,200 years ago, a large number of learned and ancient rabbis bear witness to the fact that Solomon is the author. The Targum, or paraphrase, on this book, composed in the sixth century A. D., with many other Jewish commentators, speaks of Solomon as the writer of Ecclesiastes. Equally uniform is the testimony of the teachers of the early church. The critics fully acknowledge this consensus of Jewish and Christian opinion and they have an explanation for it. They say these scholars and commentators "wanted the faculty of historical criticism, one might almost say, of intellectual discernment of the meaning and drift of a book or individual passages, . . . and that they had no material for forming that opinion other than those which are in our hands at the present time."*) We shall see what the "intellectual discernment" is, of which critics constantly boast, and we shall find that it is but another term for "infidelity."

It was Luther, the gerat German reformer who, as far as we know, began first to cast doubt upon this book. In his "Table Talks" he said; "Solomon did not write the book himself, but it was composed by Sirach in the time of the Maccabees. It is, as it were, a Talmud put together out of many books, probably from the library of Ptolemy Euergetes, King of Egypt." He was followed by Grotius in 1644 who also denied that Solomon is the author. "From that time onward," says a critic, "the stream of objections to the Solomonic authorship has flowed with an ever increasing volume." No doubt it is still flowing, and that stream carries those who trust themselves to it farther and farther away from childlike trust in God's Holy Word."

Some of the Objections of Critics.

The main objection is on linguistic lines. Hebraeists have pointed out that there are several scores of words and forms in Ecclesiastes which are found only in the post-exilian books and literature; some they claim originated even later. Professor Delitsch makes the bold statement, "If Ecclesiastes is of Solomonic origin, then there is no history of the Hebrew language." And another scholar states, "We could as easily believe that Chaucer is the author of Rasselas as that Solomon wrote Ecclesiastes." But not so hasty, gentlemen! There is another side to this question of the foreign words in this book, which, after all your objections, still is believed to be Solomon's. Your objection on these linguistic peculiarities is really an evidence for the Solomonic authorship of this book. The words which are Aramaic (and Aramaic belongs to the same branch of languages as the Hebrew

*Dr. E. H. Plumbtree in the Cambridge Bible.

Semitic) have been proven by other scholars to be in common use among the nearby nations who used the Chaldean language. Solomon was a scholar himself. No doubt all the available literature of that age and of the surrounding nations was at his disposal, and he was familiar with it. It is said of him, "His wisdom excelled the children of the East country and all the wisdom of Egypt, for he was wiser than all men." That Solomon used Aramaic words is perfectly logical; but it would have been strange if such words had been absent from this book, with its peculiar character and message. That Solomon's foreign diplomacy, as well as marriages with foreigners also made him familiar with Aramaic words and sayings is quite possible. Then we might add that no unimpeachable proof has ever been given that the Aramaic words and forms used by Solomon were of later date at all. At any rate objections to the date and authorship of a Bible book on purely philological evidence suits those perfectly who approach the Word of God as they approach any other literary production.

Another objection is made on account of the statement in chapter i:12, "I, the preacher, was king over Israel." It seems almost childish that these scholars raise such a point; it shows the weakness of their case. They declare that the writer of the book says, "I, the preacher, **was** king over Israel," and that this could not have been written by Solomon, who never ceased to be king. This objection is foolish. It is not at all the question of the fact that the writer of the book reigned as king, but rather **what was his position** at the time when he wrote the book.?

Another objection is the absence of the name of Jehovah in this book. It has been said, "A book coming from the Son of David was hardly likely to be characterized, as this is, by the omission of the name Jehovah." This objection springs from the deplorable ignorance of the critics concerning the message and purpose of this book. The omission of the name of **Jehovah** and the use of the name of God as **Elohim** exclusively is a mark of the genuineness of the book. We shall refer to this later when we touch on the character and message of Ecclesiastes.

We mention but one more of the objections. They say "That the book presents many striking parallelisms with that of Malachi, which is confessedly later than the exile and written under the Persian monarcy, probably 390 B. C."

This studied objection can readily be answered by anybody. In fact we have seen no valid objection whatever. Every one can be satisfactorily answered. A mature scholar, Dean Milman, wrote many years ago: "I am well aware that the general voice of German criticism assigns a later date than that of Solomon to this book. But I am not convinced by any arguments from internal evidence **which I have read.**"

The Message of Ecclesiastes.

No other book in the whole Bible is so perplexing, if not confusing to the average reader as is Ecclesiastes. It is a book filled with hopelessness and despair, depicting the difficulties and disappointments of life, and the hollowness of temporal things; at the same time it seemingly sanctions a conduct which clashes with the standards of holy living as revealed in other portions of the Scriptures. The utter absence of any praise, or expression of joy and peace, as it is in the group of other books to which Ecclesiastes belongs (Job, Psalms, Proverbs and Solomon's Song) is another striking characteristic.

The problem is solved in the very beginning of the book itself. In the first verse we are introduced to the illustrious author of the book, who calls himself "Koheleth," and "the son of David, King in Jerusalem." This ought to settle the question for ever. If another man wrote as the critics maintain centuries later and assumed that he is "the son of David and King of Jerusalem" he was a fraud. But why does Solomon write? What is the theme he follows? What is the object of his debate or discourse? The next two verses give the answer to these questions and the solution of the problem." Vanity of vanities, saith Koheleth; vanity of vanities—all is vanity. "What profit hath a man of all his labor which he taketh under the sun?" Here are two words which arrest our attention. The first one is "vanity," used five times in the second verse. It occurs many times throughout the book and is frequently connected with "vexation of spirit" (literally, pursuit of the wind). The word "vanity" means that which soon vanishes, nothingness. It is used for the first time by Eve when she had her second son, whom she called "Abel." So the great king, the wisest of men in his discourse in which he seeks and searches out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven (verse 13), and in all his searching independent of Jehovah's revelation, he discovers that all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

The second word which we notice is "under the sun." This expression is found twenty-nine times in this book. Now that which is "under the sun" is on the earth. There is, of course, something which is above the sun, that is heaven, the heavenly things. Ecclesiastes then is occupied with earthly things with what man does apart from God, that is the natural man. The book describes the things under the sun, shows that all what man does, his pursuits, his labors, whatever undertaken and all that is connected with it, is nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit, ever unsatisfying and filled with sorrow and perplexity. The writer makes it clear that in all his searching and description of the things under the sun he does not depend on divine revelation, on that which is above the sun, but he reacheth his results through the light which nature gives; his resources are within himself. This is confirmed by the phrase, "I communed with

my own heart," which occurs seven times in the book. The book of Ecclesiastes is therefore the book of the natural man apart from divine revelation. This is the reason why the name Jehovah (God's name as he enters in covenant relation with man) is omitted and the name of God is only expressed by Elohim, that is His Name as Creator. It shows what the natural man is, the life he lives, and the world in which he lives with its fleeting vanities. Ecclesiastes is embodied in the Holy Scriptures for one purpose, to show to the natural man the hollowness and vanity of all that is under the sun, and to convince him thereby to seek and find that which is better, that which is above the sun.

"It is the experience of a man who—retaining his wisdom, that he may judge of all—makes trial of everything under the sun that should be supposed capable of rendering men happy, through the enjoyment of everything that human capacity can entertain as a means of joy. The effect of this trial was the discovery that all is vanity and vexation of spirit; that every effort to be happy in possessing the earth, in whatever way it may be, ends in nothing. There is a canker worn at the root. The greater the capacity of enjoyment, the deeper and wider is the experience of disapointment and vexation of spirit. Pleasure does not satisfy, and even the idea of securing happiness in this world by an unusual degree of righteousness cannot be realised. Evil is there, and the government of God in such a world as this is not in exercise to secure happiness to man here below—a happiness drawn from things below and resting on their stability."*

Natural men, and even infidels, have put a kind of a seal upon the character of the book. The French infidel Renan praised it as being the only charming book that a Jew had ever written, a book, he added that touched our grief at every point, while he saw in the writer one who ever posed but was always natural and simple. Frederick the Great, equally infidel, regarded it as the most valuable book in the whole Bible.

Revelation and Inspiration.

In the study of this book the important distinction between what is "Revelation" and what is "Inspiration" must not be overlooked. What Solomon sought out, the conclusions he reached, the things he found as he communed with his own heart, all is recorded in this book by divine inspiration. But this inspired record is not revelation in the sense, for instance, as the Epistle to the Ephesians. It is not divine revelation for man to be guided by. It is not revelation concerning that which is above the sun, nor the future. We mention this because those who hold the evil doctrines of soul-sleep and also annihilation

*Synopsis.

turn to Ecclesiastes and quote (ix:5-10) as being "the Word and Revelation of God" when it is not.

The book too directs to Christ. There is that which is above the sun, that which is not vanishing, but abiding. The old creation demands a new creation and that has been made possible in Christ.*

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*In "Old Groans and New Songs" Mr. F. C. Jennings unfolds this comparison between the old and the new in a very precious way.

The Division of Ecclesiastes

It has been charged "that the book is very far removed from the character of a systematic treatise and therefore does not readily admit of a formal analysis." This verdict is far from being right, The analysis and division of the book depends on the right viewpoint concerning the contents of it. As we have stated in our introduction Ecclesiastes is the book of the natural man searching out the things under the sun and the conclusions he reached. The division of the book should be made with this theme in mind.

After reading the book carefully a number of times one finds that there are two main parts. The first six chapters form the first part and the remaining six chapters constitute the second part. In the first part the search of the wise man brings out the fact what the chief good is not, how all things under the sun are vanity and vexation of spirit. In the second part the search leads to certain conclusions. The chief good is sought for in wise conduct but in all we are still on the ground of the natural man.

PART I. CHAPTER I-VI

I. **THE PROLOGUE AND THE SEARCH BEGUN.** Chapter i-ii.

II. **THE RESULTS OF THE SEARCH.** Chapter iii-iv.

III. **EXHORTATIONS ON DIFFERENT VANITIES. CONCLUSIONS.** Chapter v-vi.

PART II. CHAPTER VII-XII

I. **THE GOOD ADVICE OF THE NATURAL MAN. DISCOURAGEMENT AND FAILURE.** Chapter vii-ix:12.

II. **THE PRAISE OF WISDOM AND PHILOSOPHY. THE FINAL WORD AND THE GREAT CONCLUSION.** Chapter ix:13-xii.

Analysis and Annotations

PART 1. CHAPTER I-VI

I. THE PROLOGUE AND THE SEARCH BEGUN. Chapter i-ii.

CHAPTER I.

1. The Introduction and Prologue. Verses 1-11.
2. The Seeker; his method and the results. Verses 12-18.

1. The Introduction and the Prologue: Verses 1-11. In the general introduction we have already referred to the opening verses as giving the information who the author is and what is the object of his treatise. So sure is the critical school that Solomon is not the king mentioned that one says "the fact that Solomon is not the author, but is introduced in a literary figure, has become such an axiom of the present day interpretation of the book, that no extended argument to prove it is necessary." Still another makes the following remarks as to the date of the book: "I shall presume that we have in this book, a late, perhaps the very latest, portion of the Old Testament canon; and that the book was written, not in the palmy days of the empire of Solomon, but at a time when the Jewish people, once so full of aspirations to universal empire, always so intolerant of foreign supremacy, was lying beneath the yoke of Persian or Syrian or Egyptian kings; when the Holy Land had become a province, ruled by some Eastern satrap, and suffering from the rapacity and corruption inherent at all times in such government" (Dean Bradley). Such presumptions spring from ignorance about the message of the book. We shall find in the text the above assertions refuted and a confirmation likewise of the Solomonic authorship.

"Before following **the Preacher** in his great quest it should be noted that he is to be viewed as a man who himself **belongs under the sun.** Whether the word Koheleth is

rendered "Preacher," "Debater" or "Assembler" or "One of an Assembly," the whole tenor of the teaching proves it is Wisdom from under the sun, Natural Wisdom, that is speaking. The wisest of men undertakes to observe and experiment with life under the sun, in order to find out for all men the outcome of all his searchings, and then rehearses all to an assembly of his fellows. He is not supposed, to know any divinely-revealed wisdom, or to have heard of a righteousness of faith, or of divine mercy, or of forgiveness of sins. He is to make answer as a natural man to whom is given the resources and helps common to natural men, only he is wiser and richer than they, and so must bring the final answer for all. And also he is a Hebrew and knows of the one living and true God. When he says "thou," in advice or warning, it is not so much to some disciple or "son" he is speaking as to himself, or he is then assuming a high ground, far above "the maddening crowd," but it is soon apparent how, in these most exalted frames of the pious and philosophic mind, he is still only a natural man, for he is found, soon after, in the depth of despair uttering his disgust and hate of life and exclaiming: "The whole is vapor and a chasing of the wind." That "thou" is, after all, a sign that he is talking to himself, telling what he and all men under the sun ought to do, but utterly fail to do.

Not only does he pronounce the verdict of "Vanity" for all, but he resorts to the same passing mirthful enjoyment he commends to all; but he would do it all before God. He is indeed wiser and more serious than other men, only to become more perplexed and sorrowful than they.

On him hangs more heavily than on other men

> " . . . the burden of the mystery
> " . . . the heavy and the weary weight
> " Of all this unintelligible world."

He, if any, can say, "I know there is nothing better for them." He is king and can lay the whole world under contribution to furnish the means for answer. "What can the man do who cometh after the king?"

He repeatedly says, "I have seen all the works that are done," all the "oppressions," and "all the labor that I labored at." And so he is to speak for the world, for the race, for man, for high, for low, wise and foolish, rich and poor, in hut and hall, living and dying. And he speaks as before God. He, of all men, feels a strange fear, seeing that somehow man's imperfect vain life under the sun is mysteriously related to and controlled by the unalterable purpose and work of God."*

The first note as to vanity is found in verses 4-11. There is a law of repetition, or circle-movement. It works in the sphere of nature as well as in human life. Generation follows generation; the sun has his circle; the winds too have their currents in which they blow from north to south and south to north; the waters also are subject to the same law. History repeats itself, for the thing that has been, is that which shall be and that which is done is that which shall be done. There is then, no new thing under the sun; nothing is new, all is repetition, a monotonous unchangeableness. Man is in the midst of it; he too is subject to this law. Everything then under the sun is restless, unstable (except the earth itself, which abideth forever: verse 4) hollow and empty, therefore all is vanity. Here is a picture of unrest, weariness, if not melancholy and despair.

2. **The Seeker; His Method and the Results: Verses 12-18.** On the critical objection that Solomon is meant in verse 12 see the general introduction. The great king, filled with wisdom and learning, rich and prosperous as none ever was before him in Jerusalem, nor after him, gives his heart to search out everything that is done under heaven. When he says: "I communed with mine own heart," he states the method of his search. He does it by meditation and not through revelation. He searches not in the light which comes from above, but that which comes from nature and by observation. He tells us a little more of himself. "Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom

*Ecclesiastes. W. J. Erdman.

than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem; yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge." Is this language not sufficient to establish beyond the shadow of the doubt that Solomon speaks? And if not Solomon, who was it who dared to write these words? And what are the given results by the great and wise king of Jerusalem? The result is twofold. "I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and behold all is vanity and vexation of spirit"—the pursuit of the wind, that is chasing air-bubbles. And another conclusion: "For in much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow" (verse 18). What a verdict from such a man as Solomon was. He had all things man can enjoy; all pleasures and honors; great possessions, chariots, horses, palaces and a large estate and he exclaims "nothing but travail!" —"Nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit!" It all leaves me empty; it does not satisfy.

But he had given himself to wisdom. He possessed unusual wisdom. The king was what we would term today a great scientist. He excelled in wisdom all the children of the East country. Proverbial in his days was "the wisdom of Egypt"; yet his wisdom was greater. His fame was in all nations round about. Philosophy and poetry were his great achievements. "And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall; he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things and of fishes" (1 Kings iv:29, etc.). He was a great botanist, an ornithologist and zoologist. He traced God's wonders in nature, that which the natural man can so easily do. But what about all this wisdom? Did it satisfy his soul? We listen to his answer: "I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit." The more knowledge the more sorrow. Alas! how true it all is!

But there is something else which satisfies? Is there a higher wisdom and knowledge? There is, but in the book of the natural man it is unrevealed. That which satisfies, which is not vanity and vexation of spirit, is that which is above the sun, and not under it. From above the sun He

came, who is the wisdom of God, the Son of God. He has come and gone, but brought to the poor thirsting and hungry heart of man the true knowledge. He who died for our sins and is now back above the sun, is He "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. ii). That which alone can satisfy is Christ.

THE RESULTS OF THE SEARCH AND DIFFERENT VANITIES.

CHAPTER II.

1. His personal Experience. Verses 1-11.
2. Various Vanities and a Conclusion. Verses 12-26.

1. His Personal Experience: Verses 1-11. Here we find first of all the king's personal experience. He experimented, so to speak, with that which is the possession of the natural man, a fallen nature. In that nature are found three things: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. We can trace these three things in the opening verses. The lust of the flesh in verses 1-3; the lust of the eyes in verses 4-6, and the pride of life in verses 7-8. He said in his heart, Go to now, I will prove thee: that is, I will try now to satisfy thee, that is myself, my heart. He said to himself, "enjoy pleasure." He laughed and had mirth; he tried wine, laid hold on folly. Then he made great works, built houses, planted vineyards, laid out beautiful oriental gardens with fruit trees, all kinds of shrubbery, with pools of water, springs and waterfalls—all so pleasing to the eye—the lust of the eyes. To all this he added servants and maidens, with great possessions. He gathered silver and gold and treasures such which only kings could obtain, gifts, probably from other monarchs, perhaps those which the Queen of Sheba brought. He also paid attention to music, had men singers, women singers and an orchestra. Then, self-satisfied, he leans back and says, "So I was great and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem; also my wisdom remained with me"

(verse 9). Who can doubt even for a moment that all this could mean any other person but Solomon; none but he could speak thus. But to make sure, he did not leave a single desire unsatisfied, for "whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy." Well, he had tried everything, every pleasure, everything that is beautiful to the eye; he was surrounded with every comfort, had all honor and glory, was wealthy and esteemed. Does he then sing and in a blessed peace of mind is he content and satisfied? Far from it. **"Then—then"**—when he had done all these things and had every desire fulfilled—"then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do; and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit; and there was no profit under the sun." It is a groan instead of a song. But that sounds pessimistic. It is the pessimism into which sin has put man. Whatever man does and seeks in satisfying that old nature, whatever his pursuits, his labors and his achievements in life, if it is that and nothing else, in the end it is nothing but vanity and a chasing of the wind.

Thank God! there is One who can still the hunger and thirst of the soul, who graciously invites, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."

2. Various Vanities and a Conclusion: Verses 12-26. He now turns in search for happiness in another direction. The old, old question, "Is life worth living?" after all he had stated must be answered negatively—if all is vanity and vexation of spirit and there is no profit under the sun, in anything man enjoys, labors for and obtains, then life is not worth living. He had been disappointed in his search, but now he turns to something more ideal and not materialistic as the former things. "Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness." He turns philosopher, but it is of no avail, for it leads in the same road and ends with the same groan—vanity and vexation of spirit. While wisdom is superior to folly as far as light is superior to darkness, yet wisdom cannot help man, cannot

give him peace nor give him happiness. There is one event which happens to the wise men and to the fool: that event is death. As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth unto me. What then was the good that I was more wise? He at once concludes "this also is vanity." Death, according to the conception of the natural man, apart from revelation, plunges the wise man and the fool into oblivion, "there is no rememberance of the wise more than of the fool for ever; seeing that which now is in the days to come shall all be forgotten and how dieth the wise man as the fool?" (verse 16). Such is the reasoning of the natural man. By revelation we know that there is rememberance. But it leads Koheleth, the king, almost to despair. He hates life. If the pursuit of pleasures, the lust of eyes and the pride of life left me empty, and were found out to be nothing but vexation of spirit, so that life is not worth living, equally so, he finds out, that wisdom in itself and its possession brings the same results—vanity of spirit—I hated life! Then he speaks of labor done. He has labored to leave it all to the one who comes after him, and he may be a fool and not a wise man. Or he may have labored wisely and it is left all to one who never did anything, a sluggard. All he brands as vanity and ends by saying, "For what hath a man of all his labors, and of the vexation of his heart wherein he hath labored under the sun? For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; yea his heart taketh no rest in the night. This is also vanity."

The conclusion reached is that, apart from God, man has no capacity to enjoy his labor. Verse 25 has been metrically rendered as follows:

> "The good is not in man that he should eat and drink
> And find his soul's enjoyment in his toil;
> This, too, I saw is only from the hands of God."

II. FURTHER RESULTS OF THE SEARCH.

Chapter iii-iv.

CHAPTER III.

THE RESULTS OF THE SEARCH.

1. The Times of Man Under the Sun. Verses 1-11.
2. What then is the Good?
3. Concerning Judgment and the Future. Verses 16-22.

1. The Times of Man Under the Sun: Verses 1-11. There is a time for everything. Twenty-eight "times" are mentioned, beginning with the time of birth and ending with the time for peace. Everything has a fixed time: Life-Death; Seeding-Harvesting; Killing-Healing; Breaking-down Building-up; Weeping-Laughing; Mourning-Dancing, etc. These are the times of the entire race; that is what human life is. All moves and changes; all appears unto him profitless. "What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboreth? What is the gain of it, to be born and to die, to plant and to pull up, to weep and to laugh, to mourn and to dance, to get and to lose, to love and to hate? But he advanced a step. He recognizeth that all this travail must be of God, who has produced these never ceasing changes, so that men's hearts might be exercised thereby." "I have seen the travail which God has given to the sons of men to be exercised in it." Yea, there is something which is in man. "God hath set the world in their heart," the correct rendering is, "God hath set eternity in their heart" (verse 11). Man has the sense of the infinite in his heart.

All that time offers, all these changes cannot satisfy, nor can man with eternity in his heart find out the truth about it by himself. He may feel but cannot understand.

2. What Then is the Good? Verses 12-15. What then is the good? To what can man in such condition, with such constant changes, and with an unsatisfied feeling of the infinite in his heart resort to? The searcher gives his

results. Let man rejoice and do good in his life. Let him eat and drink and enjoy the food of all his labor. But let him also do so fearing God in view of God's judgment, for "God requireth that which is past." This is about as far as the natural man can see.

3. Concerning Judgment and the Future: Verses 16-22. The thought of judgment expressed in verse 15 is now more fully taken up. It seems as if a ray of light now breaks in. There must be from the side of God judgment. Under the sun he saw in the place of judgment wickedness, and in the place of righteousness, wickedness was there also. Then he said in his heart, "God shall judge the righteous and the wicked." He draws the conclusion that the present injustice must be dealt with by God. But here he stops short. He may surmise, but certainty he has not. Instead of advancing in his searchings as a natural man he comes back to his old wail of vanity. "I said in mine heart, it is because of the sons of men that God may prove them, and that they may see they themselves are but as beasts. For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; and man hath no pre-eminence above the beasts: for all is vanity." It shows that as far as life beyond the present is concerned all is darkness for man. He may have "eternity set in his heart", but he has no light. Death comes alike to man and beast; they die and are gone, hence the conclusion, "man hath no pre-eminence above the beast." But man has, as the revelation of God teacheth. But here we do not listen to God's revelation but to the searchings and observations of man only. The natural man knows, "all" men and beasts "go to one place, all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again." Then there is just a faint suggestion of something which might be beyond the grave. The correct rendering of verse 21 is, "Who knoweth whether the spirit of man goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast goeth downward to the earth?" Man and beast share the same being, draw breath in the same way, spring from the dust, return

to the dust, but who can give assurance that the spirit of man really goeth upward? Who knoweth if this is really true? Who has come back and told us the truth about it? Who knoweth? Such is still the cry of the natural man with all his boasted discoveries and research. Finally he reacheth the same goal as Koheleth—all is vanity. Oh! blessed truth as given by revelation and above all in the person of our Lord and His precious Gospel! Man indeed has the pre-eminence and is not like the beast that perisheth. Redeemed by Him who became man, to die for our sins, not only the spirit of the redeemed goeth upward but in its time the body will leave the dust and be changed like unto the glorious body of Him, who as glorified man sits at the right hand of God.

Returning to the wise king with his search, in view of all this, which he has brought forth in this chapter he gives his counsel as to what man is to do under these harassing circumstances. "Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better than that a man (the natural man) should rejoice in his own works, for that is his portion; for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?" (See also vi:13.)

CHAPTER IV.

OBSERVATIONS OF DIFFERENT WRONGS.

1. Concerning Oppressions. Verses 1-3.
2. Concerning Envy of Fools and the Rich. Verses 4-7.
3. Concerning the Miser. Verses 7-12.
4. Concerning Popularity. Verses 13-16.

1. Concerning Oppressions: Verses 1-3. He observes that the world is filled with oppressions. This connects with the statement made in the previous chapter, (verse 16). Criticism declares in connection with this passage that it could not have been written by Solomon, nor does it, they claim, describe the conditions of the people Israel during the reign of the king. One commentator asks, "Can this bitter experience be drawn, I asked in passing, from the golden

days of Solomon, from the high noon of Hebrew prosperity, as sketched in the Book of Kings?" They apply it to the days of the Ptolemies. But Solomon does not say that the oppressions were in Jerusalem at all. He says that he saw "all the oppressions that are done under the sun." As the great king was in touch with other nations he knew what oppression, poverty, tears and sorrow are in the world, and that the oppressed, the grief stricken, the down-trodden, have no comforter. It is so still, "under the sun." Oppression and all that goes with it is still the history of part of the race and will be as long as sin reigns. Injustice and unredressed wrongs have been the order for almost six thousand years. So deep is his sorrow over these conditions that he declares it would have been better for both the living and the dead if they had never existed at all.

2. Concerning Envy of Fools and the Rich: Verses 4-7. In continuing his observations he mentions the successful man, the man who has made life worth living. But success breeds envy. It makes his life bitter. Instead of being loved the successful man is hated; what else then is it but vanity and vexation of spirit! But now another extreme. It is the sluggard, the lazy man, the fool who eats his own flesh. But here is the best human wisdom can suggest. Avoiding both extremes, he declares, "Better is an handful with quietness, than two handsful with labor and vexation of spirit."

3. Concerning the Miser: Verses 7-12. Another vanity is observed. Some are misers, heaping up riches and treasures untold. He has no relations, no children, no brother; even companionship and friendship are unknown to him. He lives his solitary life. His ambition is to labor and gather riches, but his eyes are never satisfied with riches; he wants more and more all the time. This also is vanity and is a sore travail.

4. Concerning Popularity: Verses 13-16. Popularity is another vanity and vexation of spirit. No lot is abiding. Upon the throne sits an old and foolish king. He is dethroned and is replaced by a youth out of prison.

III. EXHORTATIONS ON DIFFERENT VANITIES.

Conclusions—Chapter v-vi.

CHAPTER V.

EXHORTATIONS

1. Concerning Worship and Vows. Verses 1-7.
2. Concerning Extortions. Verses 8-9.
3. The Vanities of Wealth. Verses 10-17.
4. The Conclusion. Verses 18-20.

1. Concerning Worship and Vows: Verses 1-7. The writer, King Solomon, seems to have been exhausted in his descriptions as to the things under the sun. He pauseth and turns to something different. He meditates on worship, that man aims to get in touch with the unseen God. "He seems to turn to himself again and communes with his heart on the loftier heights of what proves to be, after all, but natural religiousness, and which cannot save him from the depths of unbelief, ignorance and despair, in which he is soon hopelessly floundering. Mindful of man's jaunty liberalism and enslaving superstitions, rash vows and wordy prayers, shallow reverence and dreamy worship—dreamy and unreal because full of entreating vanities and worldly business, the speaker earnestly exhorts the multitude going to the house of God to have few words and slow and solemn steps in their worship and vows; but even then he does so like a natural man himself, knowing only of a God far away, who is looking upon the sinful on earth with cold judicial eye, ready to destroy the work of man in wrath."* The natural man may feel God, fear Him with a slavish fear, make an attempt to worship Him and do something, yet he does not know God nor can he know Him by himself. Christendom, even to-day, bears witness to the worship of the natural man. Yet this natural religion, which recognizeth the existence of a Creator, speaks of Him as the All-wise, the Omnipotent and the Eternal, makes an attempt to

*Ecclesiastes by W. J. Erdman.

worship in a house by ceremonies and ritual, or that which takes on a more liberal form, does not meet the needs of man. God is still in heaven and man on earth (verse 2), and a vast distance between—an unbridged gulf. To bring man to God, to give him peace and assurance, to deliver him from fear, revelation is needed that which is "above the sun." The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the only provision.

2. Concerning Extortions: Verses 8-9. Once more he calls attention to oppression, the extortions so common "under the sun," and he shows that One higher than they will some day judge them, for He has regard for the poor and the oppressed.

3. The Vanities of Wealth: Verses 10-17. He speaks now of wealth and of earthly prosperity. Silver does not satisfy, nor is he that loveth abundance satisfied with the increase. It is vanity. Earthly happiness in the things under the sun is a vain hope. The reasons why riches, and what goes along with them, cannot give true enjoyment have been searched out by the wise king and the results of his observations are given in these verses. "As he came forth from his mother's womb naked so shall he go again as he came, and shall take nothing for his labor, which he may carry away in his hand . . . and what profit hath he that he laboreth for the wind?" (See 1 Timothy vi:7).

4. The Conclusion: Verses 18-20. What then has he seen and learned in observing all these vanities? He draws the conclusion that it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and then to enjoy to fullest extent the good which he has obtained all the days of his life, the life and length of days given him by the Creator. And if God has given him riches and wealth and the capacity to enjoy it, then he ought to take his portion and rejoice in his labor. Such a spirit of enjoyment will make him forget the evil in his day; it will carry him over the disagreeable things of life. "For he shall not much remember the days of his life, because God answereth him in the joy of his heart." The latter phrase means that God Himself corresponds to his joy, for real enjoyment is a God-acknowledging spirit.

CHAPTER VI.

DISHEARTENING CONTRADICTIONS.

1. Riches—Inability to enjoy them. Verses 1-2.
2. Having All—Yet no Fill of the Soul. Verses 3-9.
3. The Sad Ending Wail. Verses 10-12.

1. Riches and Inability to Enjoy Them: Verses 1-2. The first evil which the wise searcher as a discouraging contradiction is, that God giveth a man riches, wealth, and honor so that he does not lack in anything whatever. But God does not give him the power to enjoy it, a stranger instead eats thereof. This makes impossible what he stated in the closing verses of the preceding chapter. The cherished desires of man has found no fulfilment. And if he has seen this evil, so do we still see it also. Where then is "the good and comely" of chapter v:18? This is vanity and it is an evil disease, he confesseth.

2. Having All—Yet No Fill of the Soul: Verses 3-9. But here is more of life's bitterness. If one should beget a hundred children and live to a very ripe old age, so old he becomes that it seems as if there is to be no burial for him at all, yet his soul is not filled with good—what then? "I say that an untimely birth is better than he; for it cometh in vanity and departeth in darkness, and the name thereof is covered with darkness; moreover it has not seen the sun nor known it; this hath rest rather than the other: yea, though he live a thousand years twice told, and yet enjoy no good; do not all go to one place?" It is a sad, sorrowful picture, yet every word of it is true as to man's existence. With all his long life and all it brings, riches and power, his soul has not the fill it needs, that which satisfies. His life ends at last and then there is the one place—the region of the unknown, the Sheol, where they all go. And about that one place there is no light; it is felt existence after death but of what nature? All is darkness! Better, far better off, is the untimely birth.

In verse 7 he comes back again to the labor that man

does. It is for the mouth, yet it does not satisfy—the appetite is not filled. The hunger returns, and man must labor to satisfy it and yet it is never filled. The fool and the wise make the same experience. The wise has no advantage over the fool; and the poor man who has something to eat in sight is far better off than the rich, whose desires wander, seeking that which gratifies. Vanity and Vexation of spirit! We may all sum it up in a brief sentence: Man under the sun, whatever he does, all his labors, all his riches, all his seeking for good, all his achievements cannot satisfy him, it cannot give that which the soul of man craves and needs. Nor can it ever be discovered by the searcher, the wise man, the philosopher, the scientist. What man needs is not anything, "under the sun" but that which is "from above the sun."

4. The Sad Ending Wail: Verses 10-13. Who knoweth what is good for man in this life that is—what is it that can satisfy the heart and soul of man? He spendeth all the days of his vain life as a shadow. For who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun. It is the wail of darkness and despair. Who knoweth? Not the natural man. But the question which man cannot answer, God has graciously, blessedly and eternally answered in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. With Peter we too cry out, "Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (John vi:68).

PART II. CHAPTER vii:xii.

I. THE GOOD ADVICE OF THE NATURAL MAN. DISCOURAGEMENT AND FAILURE.

Chapter vii-ix:12.

CHAPTER VII.

1. The Better Things. Verses 1-14.
2. The Anomalies. Verses 15-18.
3. The Strength of Wisdom, yet None Perfect. Verses 19-22.
4. The Worst Thing He Found. Verses 23-29.

1. The Better Things: Verses 1-14. All had been tested by the royal searcher; all was found out to be vanity and vexation of spirit. Darkness, discouragement, uncertainty and despair were the results. The good, that which is right and comely for men, supposedly, found had also turned unto vapor, empty and hollow like the rest. He starts now in a new direction; he turns moralist and philosophizeth on the better things. He climbs high with his reason and deductions. He had come to the conclusion that life is not worth living. Having riches, possession of everything, were found out nothing but vanity. Perhaps being good, having the better things morally, and doing good, will satisfy the heart in "which is set eternity," the soul of man. And so he makes his observations in seven comparisons.

A good name; better than precious ointment; the day of death better than the day of birth; the house of mourning is better than the house of feasting; sorrow is better than laughter; the rebuke of the wise better than he songs of fools; the end of a thing better than the beginning; the patient in spirit better than the proud in spirit. He has used his highest power of reasoning in reaching these conclusions, similar to the conclusions of other wise men, moralists and philosophers among the pagans. The different "sacred writings" of other nations, the Greek, Roman, Persian, Hindu, Chinese, etc., poetry and ethics as well as philosophies of all these nations give a definite proof that Ecclesiastes is the book of the natural man, that reason speaks and not revelation. For these "sacred writings" and philosophies are on the same line as our book. But does this satisfy? Can man thereby attain perfection? His heart has passions which man cannot control. Oppression makes a wise man mad (verse 7); anger is in his bosom (verse 9). Again he mentions wisdom. It is a good thing, just as good as an inheritance; it profits to see the sun, but not above the sun. Wisdom and wealth are both good as a defense; both give life, animate the person who possess them, give a certain amount of enjoyment. But can both

wisdom and wealth give a solution of man's problem? Who can make that straight which God hath made crooked? His ways are mysterious, unsolvable as far as man is concerned; man cannot solve the providential dealings of God. Prosperity is followed by adversity and adversity by prosperity; He sets one over against the other. But who by his reason, by his wisdom, can find out what God will do in the future, what His dealings will be? In the very reading of all these statements one feels like walking in a dense fog. Some statements are beclouded so that it is difficult to ascertain the correct meaning what the searcher is really aiming at. Perhaps this is the case to teach the lesson how man, with his finite reason searching for light, apart from revelation, wanders in darkness and ends in confusion.

2. Anomalies: Verses 15-18. Prosperity and adversity, controlled by a higher power; how are they meted out? No one knows when they come; they come to the righteous and to the wicked. He has seen the righteous perish in his righteousness and the wicked prolongs his days in his wickedness. How does the natural man, the philosopher, meet this difficulty? He answereth it by what is called "common sense." "Be not righteous overmuch, neither make thyself overwise; why should thou destroy thyself." Do not overdo it, strike a happy medium; avoid any kind of excess; be not too self-righteous for you might become puffed up and then you destroy yourself. Here is more "common sense" of the natural man. Be not overmuch wicked, neither be thou foolish; why shouldst thou die before thy time? Enjoy yourself, but avoid too much wickedness; have a good time but avoid excesses. Not too much righteousness and not too much wickedness; just a happy middle way; such a way, thinks the natural man, is not compatible with the fear of God.

3. The Strength of Wisdom; Yet None Perfect: Verse 18-22. Wisdom is strength. He had tried wisdom; he tells us what he proved by wisdom. But the wise man makes a wise confession: "I said I will be wise; but it was far from me." He owns his ignorance. Everything has

left him unsatisfied. He cannot find out by wisdom that which is far off and exceeding deep. All is imperfection. "There is not a just man on the earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (verse 20).

4. The Worst Thing He Found: Verse 25-29. Again he applies his heart to know, to search and to go to the root of the matter—to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness. And what does he find? "I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands." He speaks here as a Hebrew with the knowledge at least of what happened to man. God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions. And woman was deceived by the serpent and her heart is often a snare and a net and her hands drag down into the vile things of the flesh. Here, at least, is an acknowledgment that sin is in the world and has corrupted the old creation, but what about the remedy? He knows nothing of that, for the new creation which lifts man out of the condition where sin has put him is the subject of the revelation of God.

CHAPTER VIII.

1. Prudence Before Kings. Verses 1-10.
2. Of the Righteous and the Wicked. Verses 11-13.
3. The Conclusion. Verses 14-17.

1. Prudence Before Kings: Verses 1-10. What else had he seen? What were his further discoveries? He is still ardent in praising wisdom, though he had confessed "that it was far from him." Wisdom makes the face to shine and the boldness of the face becomes changed. He cautions as to the governmental powers in the world, urges prudence and submission. He is a keen observer. But nothing can deliver from the power of the grave. The tyrannic ruler ruleth over another to his own hurt, but the power of the tyrant does not deliver him from the power of the grave and he is soon forgotten.

2. Of the Righteous and the Wicked: Verses 11-13. But here is a true statement, which the natural man dis-

covers by observation, for instance, in reading the pages of history. "Because sentence against an evil work is not speedily executed, therefore the hearts of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Evil will be punished; man knows that by experience. And he knows "that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before Him. But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days which are as a shadow, because he feareth not God. But what about his former saying, "Be not righteous overmuch—be not overmuch wicked?" He is in perplexity. But his reason, which has approved of "fearing God," by which he knows that it shall be well on earth with the righteous, is now staggered, when he sees just men unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked, and wicked men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous. Nothing but contradictions! Like a shipwrecked man who strikes out amidst the raging waves to reach the land, and is constantly thrown back by the waves he tries to master, with all his wisdom, his searching, his conclusions and nice sayings, he is thrown back, and once more he cries his "vanity."

3. The Conclusion: Verses 15-17. He is at the end of his wit. He moralized, spoke of things better; made his observations and gave exhortations; a measure of light he has to judge certain things, but the darkness is too overwhelming. His boasted wisdom has left him stranded completely. What then shall he say? In spite of the higher tone he assumed, he is back at his old conclusion, only more emphatic than before: "Then I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry; for that shall abide with him of his labor the days of his life, which God giveth him under the sun." Enjoy life! There is no better thing! Thank God through revelation we know "the better part," that which satisfies and which abides. Then comes the confession of utter helplessness in verse 17. A man, the natural man, cannot find out, he is not able to find out anything.

CHAPTER IX.

Verses 1-12.

1. The Common Fate. Verses 1-6.
2. Make the Best of Life. Verses 7-10.
3. The Great Uncertainty. Verses 11-12.

1. The Common Fate: Verses 1-6. Here is another conclusion. The righteous and the wise with their works are in the hands of God. One event is in store for all, for the righteous, the wicked, the good, the clean, the unclean, the one who sacrificeth and the one who sacrificeth not—the grave is the one common goal. In that goal there is the end of all human toil and ambition. But even with this knowledge that all go one way, and the certainty of it, man does not reckon with it at all; "the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their hearts while they live." They live on with madness in the heart; then comes death. Surely reason, dark reason, says "a living dog is better than a dead lion"; the dead lion has nothing left of all his majestic awe, but if man is alive, though he be as a dog, it is the better thing. Surely everything here is pessimism gone to seed. And what in this darkening perplexity does the searcher have to say about the dead? "The dead know not anything, neither have they any more reward; for the memory of them is forgotten" (verse 5). And again, "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave (Sheol) whither thou goest." But is this the truth? Is this a doctrine of the faith delivered unto the Saints? Is this the revelation of God? A thousand times, No! It is the verdict which the natural man, pagan or infidel philosopher, pronounceth. But revelation, the life and immortality brought to light by the Gospel, tells us something entirely different. Yet these sentences penned when the searcher finds himself in the most despairing condition, are used by men and women, who claim to be Christians, to prove the abominable doctrines of "soul-sleep," that after death the soul plunges into a state of unconsciousness, and that the wicked are annihilated.

Christian doctrine? NO! but paganism, and a denial of the revelation from above the sun.

2. Make the Best of Life: Verses 7-10. Therefore, because "death ends it all," that unbelievable conclusion of the natural man, make the best of life. Feast well and enjoy your wine, be sure and let the wine of earthly joys make your heart merry. Dress spotlessly in the heights of fashion; be well groomed; put ointment on your head. Have a good time with your wife; enter into everything energetically—for a little while longer and you reach the common fate. Is this also "revelation" for faith to follow, or is there something better from above the sun? The New Testament answers blessedly this question.

3. The Great Uncertainty: Verses 11-12. He returns—to speak another word. Even this is not satisfying. A man knoweth not his time, "As the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them."

II. PRAISE OF WISDOM AND PHILOSOPHY. THE FINAL WORD AND THE GREAT CONCLUSION.

Chapter ix-13:xii.

CHAPTER IX.
Verses 13-18.

Before he had declared that wisdom is strength. He comes back to this statement and gives an illustration of it. He is in a calmer mood, but what does his meditation amount to? Only to show that this also is vanity.

CHAPTER X.

This chapter contains a series of proverbs, expressing the wisdom and prudence of the natural man. Here are a number of observations and all show that there is a practical value in wisdom and that it has certain advantages. These

maxims are of a different kind than the proverbs in the preceding book. There we are face to face with the wisdom which is from above, here it is the wisdom of man. The name of the Lord is not mentioned once. Similar philosophic utterances can be traced in the literature of other ancient nations. They need no detail annotations.

CHAPTER XI.

1. Proverbs Concerning Man's Work. Verses 1-6.
2. The Vanity of Life. Verses 7-10.

1. Proverbs Concerning Man's Work: Verses 1-6. These continued proverbs concern the work of man and begin with exhortations to charity and are followed by the wise acknowledgment that no one knows the works of God, who is the maker of all. All this knowledge is within the compass of the natural man.

2. The Vanity of Life: Verses 7-10. After these philosophic proverbs he comes back to his former finding—vanity. So to speak he sums up life in one verse, "Truly the light is sweet and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun." It is a great thing to have life. A different strain from his despondency, when life seemed not worth living. Alas! there is another "but." "But if a man live many years, and rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness; for they shall be many. All that cometh is vanity." Yes, let him enjoy himself in the present, but there is "a dead fly in the ointment" (x:1). There is looming up the dark future; days of darkness are coming for him—it is the grave, and human reason, philosophy, science nor anything else can bring light into this baffling darkness. "All that cometh is vanity!" Thank God, through revelation we know that those who believe His revelation, and believe on Him, whom God has sent, who is the propitiation for our sins, who conquered death and the grave—for such, "all that cometh is glory!"

Is it sarcasm that follows? He calls upon the young man to rejoice in his youth. Have a good time! Walk in

the ways of thine heart, that heart out of which nothing but evil can come, and in the sight, not of the all-seeing eye of God, but of thine eyes. Do as you like! Follow my previous advice—be not righteous overmuch; be not too wicked; follow the middle road and enjoy yourself. Then comes a weighty sentence, "but know thou that for all these things God shall bring thee to judgment." But is not this revelation? Can the reason of man discover that such will be the case? Reason does know the law in nature "that whatsoever a man sows that he shall also reap." Reason beholds this law working not only in nature, which teaches man many things, but also in history, so that the philosopher can say, "the history of the world is the judgment of the world."

CHAPTER XII.

1. Youth and Old Age. Verses 1-8.
2. The Concluding Epilogue Verses 9-14.

1. Youth and Old Age: Verses 1-8. Childhood and youth are vanity! That is the concluding sentence of the previous chapter. The vanities of life, the doom and darkness of the grave are uppermost in his mind, and the final word he speaks, ere he closeth with his epilogue, is the same with which he began his search, the search which brought out so many things, yet nothing in reality—as in the beginning of the book, so now he cries out, "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, all is vanity" (verse 8). He has come back in all his reasonings to the place from which he started.

Once more he speaks of youth and exhorts, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." This advice is given in connection with the thought expressed in chapter xi:9, "God will bring thee into judgment." Yet the natural man cannot obey this command. He then points to that which is inevitable. The balmy days of youth and energy will be followed by years in which man says, "I have no pleasure in them," the days of old age. Then death stalks in and the dust returns to the earth as it was and the

spirit to God who gave it (verse 7). The description of the approach of old age is extremely beautiful. Clouds begin to cast a shadow over the spirit; sorrows multiply, one comes after the other like "clouds return after rain." The keepers of the house (the hands) tremble with weakness, and the strong men (the knees) become feeble. But a few of the grinders (the teeth) are left and those that look out of the windows (the eyes) are darkened. Then the doors are shut in the streets, the ears become dull and can no longer hear the familiar sound of the grinding at the mill; he is troubled with sleeplessness and no longer enjoys pleasure. He is troubled with fears. His hair becomes snow-white like the almond tree in bloom and the least thing becomes a heavy burden; the appetite is gone. Age has come and man is ready to go to his "age-long home." The silver cord is snapped (the spinal column), the golden bowl is broken (the brain), the pitcher is broken at the fountain (the heart), and the wheel broken at the cistern (the blood and its circulation). But if he speaks of an age-long home, what is that home? And he speaks now of the spirit returning to God, but what does it mean? There is no answer, no light on these questions, for the natural man, even at his best, and in highest wisdom, cannot find the truth for himself about that "home" nor what it means—the spirit return to God. And thus he ends, "All is vanity."

But if we turn to the Gospel, the Gospel of God, the Gospel of His Son the Lord Jesus Christ, the Gospel which is from above the sun, which reaches down to lost man under the sun, that blessed Gospel lifts man higher and higher, till redeemed, saved by grace, washed in the blood of the Lamb, he reaches the place above the sun, the Father's house with its many mansions, the eternal home of the Saints of God.

The final great conclusion remains. He reaches the high-water mark of his reasoning wisdom. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work unto judgment with every

hidden thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." This is great wisdom, but does it help man? Does it bring comfort to his soul? Does it carry with it that which satisfies his heart? God is in heaven and man on the earth, he said before. There is an immeasurable distance between. And this masterly conclusion of the royal searcher still leaves God and man apart, with not even the faintest glimmer of light. Man is a sinner; how can his sins be forgiven? How can man, with a sinful heart, "obey commandments?" What about that judgment of every hidden thing? Alas! no answer; and man, struggling man, lost, sinful man, face to face with that which the highest natural wisdom can produce, must quake and tremble.

Hence Ecclesiastes is the way-preparer for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Like every other Old Testament book it points and leads to Christ, in whom all problems are solved, all questions answered, in whom the old creation ends and the new begins.

THE SONG OF SONGS

The Song of Songs

Introduction.

The Song of Solomon, as this book is called in the St. James Version, is the third book of which Solomon is the author, preceded by Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. In the Hebrew Bible it occupies a different place. It is found there in the section called "Kethubim," the Hagiographic division. It belongs to the so-called "Megilloth" or rolls and is placed first among them—Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and Esther. In the synagogual service it has been appointed to be read on the eighth day of Passover, the feast of redemption. This is suggestive, for, as we shall see, this Song is a love-song, expressing the love of Messiah for His people.

A better title for this book is "the Song of Songs." It corresponds to the Hebrew beginning of the book in Hebrew—*Shir Ha-shirim.* It is called "Song of Songs" in the Septuagint (Asma Asmaton) and also in the Vulgate (Canticum Canticorum). This title expresses most fully the spiritual meaning of this little book.

Needless to say, that this beautiful song has suffered much from the hands of the men who claim to be critics of the Word of God. We do not care to repeat the charges which have been made against this Song as being sensuous, if not immoral, in its suggestions. Such is the verdict of the natural man, who, by such criticism, reveals the state of his own heart.

The Solomonic authorship has likewise been attacked, and it is claimed that the book was written long after Solomon's day. Wellhausen, the German critic, declares that "the most original of the Hagiographic writings is the song of Solomon; the names and things which occur in it assign it clearly to the second half of the Persian period. We see from it that the Law had not yet forbidden love-poetry to the Jews, and had not made the enjoyment of life impossible." Nearly all the other critics have placed the date after the exile. The objections against the composition of the book in Solomon's period are mostly on account of a few words, which critics think were unknown to the people during Solomon's reign. What we have stated on these philological objections in the introduction to Ecclesiastes holds good in the case of this book also. While Wellhausen and others have denied the Solomonic authorship and date, other scholars have declared that the song itself has all the marks of Solomon. Among these marks Professor Delitzsch mentions "the familiarity with nature, the fulness and extent of the book's geography and artistic references, the mention of so many exotic plants and foreign things, particularly of such objects of luxury as the Egyptian horses."

Neither the Jews nor the early church doubted the authenticity of Solomon's Song. It formed part of the Hebrew Canonical Scriptures from very ancient times, and there is no valid reason why it should be rejected or the Solomonic authorship be denied.

Another question which has been raised is as to the unity of the contents. Inasmuch as different voices are heard speaking in this little book, and it being composed of dialogues as well as monologues, some critics claim that the book is not a unity, but rather a collection of love poems, similar to those written by Burns and Heine. One critic (Budde) endeavors to prove that the book is a collection of folk-songs sung at weddings, which some unknown hand collected. But the unity of the book in tone and it language disposes of this theory, nor is there any ground to call it, as some have done, a Hebrew drama.

The Story of the Song.

It is the story of the love of King Solomon for Shulamith, the bride, who by turns is a vine-dresser, shepherdess, midnight inquirer, etc., while the king is described in all his beauty, as the beloved one. In this way the Jewish interpreters as well as the vast majority of Christian commentators have understood the story of the song.

But there is also a different explanation of the story, the so-called "literalist." It was first proposed by an expositor by name of Jacobi in 1771, and was later adopted by Herder, Umbreit, the critic Ewald, the French infidel Renan and others. In England it found an able defender in Dr. Ginsburg. Briefly stated this literalist explanation is as follows:

There lived somewhere at Shulem a widowed mother, several sons and a beautiful daughter. They were farmers. One day while the damsel tended the flocks, while resting under an apple tree, she met a beautiful young shepherd to whom she was later espoused. One morning this youth invited her to accompany him into the field, but as her brothers were anxious for her reputation they sent her away to take care of the vineyards. She then requested him to meet her in the evening, and, as he did not keep his appointment, and fearing that he might have had an accident, she searched for him and found him. One day she met accidentally King Solomon, who happened to be on a summer visit to that neighborhood. Enraptured by the beauty of the damsel, the king took her to his royal tent, and there, assisted by court ladies, endeavored with alluring flatteries and promises, to gain her affections, but without effect. Released from the presence of the king, the girl sought her beloved shepherd. But the king took her with him to Jerusalem in great pomp, in the hope of dazzling her with his splendor; but neither did this prevail, for while even there she told her beloved shepherd, who had followed her to the city, that she was anxious to be with him.

The shepherd, on hearing this, praised her constancy, and such a mutual demonstration of their love took place, that several of the court ladies were greatly affected by it. The king was still determined to win her affections and watched for a favorable opportunity, and with flatteries and allurements, surpassing all former ones, tried to obtain his purpose. He promised to give her the highest rank, if she would comply with his wishes, but she refused, declaring that her affections were pledged to another. The king then was obliged to dismiss her, and the shepherdess with her beloved returned to her native place.

There are at least three reasons why this view must be rejected. In the first place, it makes havoc with the order of the book. The text must be cut up, and a veritable "grasshopper-method," jumping from one place and chapter to another, must be employed in order to put such a story together. In the second place, it is contrary to all the Jewish and Christian interpretation of the past; they all must be branded as erroneous if this literalist explanation is the true one. And finally it makes of King Solomon, who as King of Peace, and in the glory of his kingdom, is a type of Christ, the Messiah, a vile tempter, who tries his utmost to seduce the shepherdess.

We therefore believe that it is the story of Solomon's love for his bride, the Shulamith, as believed by the vast majority of Jewish and Christian expositors.

The Allegorical Meaning.

That this song has a deep, mystical and spiritual meaning has always been recognized. The Jews have looked upon it in this light and some orthodox Jews forbade it to be read till a person had reached the thirtieth year. It has been called by them "the Holy of Holies." Jewish interpretation has rightly explained this love-song as typifying the love of Jehovah for his people Israel and His union with His people. We believe this is the correct interpretation, only it is not Israel, the whole nation, but rather the godly remnant. The Song of Songs shows forth the affections which the King-Messiah creates in the heart of this remnant at the time of the re-establishment of their relationship with Himself, when once more they enter into that blessed relationship, which has been severed for such a long time. Here, then, is a blessed revelation in a mystical form of Christ's devoted love for the remnant of His people and Jerusalem, and the heart response which comes from that remnant.

The Larger Application.

This interpretation does not exclude another and larger application to Christ and the Church. Such an application is fully warranted

by the teaching of the New Testament. While the Messiah loves the remnant of His people Israel, whose love and heart devotion He will animate in the future, when they are taken back into His favor, He also loved the church and gave Himself for it. Both Israel's union with the Messiah, the Lord God, and the greater union of the Church and Christ, are typified in both Testaments by the marriage relation. The following passages will demonstrate this fully: Isa. liv:5, lxii:5; Jer. iii:1; Ezek. xvi, xxiii and many others; in the New Testament: Matt. ix:15, xxii:2, xxv:1; John iii:29; 2 Cor. xi:2; Eph. v:23, 32; Rev. xix:7, xxii:17.

The teaching of some that only Israel is the Bride of Christ must be rejected. It is true that the church, as the body and bride of Christ, is unrevealed in the Old Testament, but it is anticipated, and we have a perfect right therefore to apply the precious statements in this song of love to ourselves.

This has been done in the past. The history of the application to the church is of much interest. We touch upon it briefly.

Hippolytus (225 A.D.) was the first commentator of Solomon's Song and he states that the primary application is to Israel and next to the church. Origen developed this application to the church and her union with Christ more fully. After him the identification of the bridegroom and the bride with Christ and the church became the predominant one. Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa and Jerome followed more or less the interpretation and application made by Origen. Jerome's view was that the bride and the bridegroom were Christ and the church, or Christ and the soul. Augustine agreed with him also, but restricted the meaning to the union of Christ and the church.

Theodore of Mopsuestia, a great expositor of the Word of God, gave the Song a more literal explanation. Chrysostom, Theodoret and nearly all the great exegetes of the early church teach that the Song typifies the love of Christ for His church.

In the Middle Ages the mystical school made great use of this portion of the Word of God. Thus Bernard of Clairvaux preached not less than eighty sermons on the first two chapters. To mention all the expositors of the Middle Ages and more recent ones would fill pages.

The critical school has broken away completely from the spiritual application to Christ and the church. "The admixture of this carnal imagery," says Dr. Harper in the Cambridge Bible, "with the more spiritual passion of the bride and her lover has grown repulsive to us as it could not be formerly."

The Division of the Song.

Different divisions of this song have been made; none appears to be satisfactory. We believe the best way to study the Song of Songs is to take it up verse by verse without attempting a detailed division and analysis.

Annotations

SONG OF SONGS.

In studying this Love Song the primary application to the remnant of Israel must not be lost sight of. It is to be kept in mind that we are on Jewish ground and that the perfect assurance of that perfect love, which we know as members of His body, is lacking. The deeper spiritual applications which the individual believer may make in heart communion with the Lord, must be left to each person. In a certain sense we are here in the "Holiest" of all, for love-communion with our Saviour-Lord is the most precious thing. It produces that worship and adoration which is so acceptable in His sight, the worship in the Spirit. Our annotations will therefore be more of a general nature, but, we trust, under God, helpful to a deeper study of the Book.

CHAPTER I.

The Bride speaks first. She is occupied with the Beloved One. What He is, and all his kindness and loveliness have produced in her heart the love and admiration she expresses. The first rapturous outburst is, "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth; for thy love is better than wine." She does not mention the Beloved by name; for her there is but One, beautifully illustrated by Mary when she came to the sepulchre and seeking Him said to the one she supposed to be the gardener, "If thou hast borne Him hence." The kiss expresseth reconciliation (Luke xv:20), it is the token of peace, and above all, of affection. Thus the remnant of Israel will long for Him, for reconciliation, peace, and His affections. But true believers, the members of Himself, know in fullest assurance their reconciliation in Him; that He is Peace and enjoy His affection. His love is better than wine. Wine is the symbol of earthly joys

and pleasures; far better than anything under the sun is His love.

In verse 3 His worthy Name is described as "ointment poured forth." It is because of all He is and all He gives. Well do we sing, "How sweet the Name of Jesus sounds in a believer's ear." The passage reminds us of Mark xiv:5. For all who know Him His Name is the Name above every other name. But while we know His Name in all its preciousness, His own people Israel, the godly among them, will know Him likewise in the future. The virgins mentioned here, loving Him, are those separated ones in Israel who refuse to fall in line with the antichristian delusion of the great tribulation. We find them mentioned in Rev. xiv:1–5.

The bride desires to be drawn by Him and knows that if He draws all will run after Him. Then the King appears and brings her into His chambers, typifying full communion of love. Joy and rejoicing are the results. Verses 5–6 is the bride's confession. She confesseth she is black, which does not denote at all, as some have taken it, that she was an Ethiopian. It means sunburnt, as she declares, "Look not upon me because I am black, because the sun has looked upon me." She passed through the scorching heat of affliction and sorrow, yet she is comely (Ezek. xvi:10); through His mercy and kindness not forsaken. The daughters of Jerusalem the bride addresses are those of the nation, who do not yet share her knowledge of the Beloved, the Messiah. Israel had been called to be "the keeper of the vineyards," that is, the keeper of nations and to be a blessing to them; but she had failed; not even her own vineyard did she keep. It is her confession to Him whom she now knows and longs for.

And she wants to belong to Him only, and be with Him where He is. She seeks shelter in the place where He makes His flock to rest at noon; for her soul loves Him. For her He is become the shepherd of Israel, who has found His sheep (Isa. xlix:10; Ezek. xxxiv:13–15). And if the remnant of Israel thus longs for Him and His precious fellow-

ship, how much more should we, His heavenly people, love Him and be attached to Him only! Then He speaks in verse 8. Because of her confession He calls her the fairest among women. She is to go forth "by the footsteps of the flock." What He says of her, what she is, He Himself has produced in her and for her. The horses imply energy and swiftness (same as in the New Testament); the ornaments the gifts of His love (Ezek. xvi:11). Interesting is verse 11, "We will make bead-rows of gold with studs of silver." The Jews believe that both God and the Messiah are Kings. "We" denotes the Father and the Son; the bead-rows of gold and studs of silver denote the royal and the nuptial crown for the bride (Esther ii:17; Ezek. xvi:12). Thus Messiah will crown His faithful ones in Israel, while His church will be crowned in glory.

Then the bride speaks again of her affections in the rest of the chapter. While the bridegroom calls her fair, she in return cries out, "Behold, Thou art fair, my Beloved, yea, pleasant."

CHAPTER II.

The voice of the bride is heard again in the opening verses of this chapter; some understand it as meaning the Messiah speaking of Himself as the Rose and the Lily of the valley, but it is rather the bride. She is in her purity and separation like the lily among thorns, among the apostates of the nation during the end of the Jewish age. Of the Messiah she speaks as the apple-tree. She has no fruit of herself, but rests under Him as the blessed fruit-bearer. Under Him she finds her shelter, while He protects her and she can enjoy His fruit under His shadow. There she, and all true believers have rapture and rest and enjoy His fruit, which is sweet to the taste. The Bridegroom has brought her to His own place. She is in the house of wine (the better translation, instead of, banquetting house). Unlimited joy and gladness are now her portion; the banner of love is over her; while she revels in His love, and He, too, rests in His love, for all His gracious purposes towards the godly

remnant of Israel are accomplished. The spiritual application to the church is easily made. In verse 7 she charges the daughters of Jerusalem not to disturb in any way the love-relations she enjoys, till He please, till the rest of the daughters of Jerusalem, too, shall know Him, according to His own purpose. It is interesting to note that several times the phrase, "I charge you daughters of Jerusalem" is found in this song. Each time it is followed by His coming. Here we read, "The voice of my Beloved! Behold He cometh!" It is His coming as Messiah revealing Himself to the bride. In chapter iii:6 He comes as King Messiah; His Name is revealed as Solomon, the Prince of Peace. Then once more the same phrase, "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem," is found in chapter viii:4–5, and here the bride is coming out of the wilderness with Him, leaning on her Beloved, not the supposed shepherd lover, but King Messiah.

The rest of this chapter bears witness to the correctness of the Jewish interpretation. All shows that it refers to the time when the remnant of Israel knows Him and is enjoying the blessings and the glories promised unto them. The winter is past, the time of death and coldness; the rain is over, spring-time is at hand. The morning without clouds is breaking! Flowers appear; the birds begin their song; the cooing of the bird of love, the turtle dove, is heard. Furthermore, the fig tree putteth forth her green figs (the national fruit-bearing of the once cursed fig tree); the vines, too, begin to give the tender grapes. Who cannot see in the imagery of all these statements that millennial times are about to begin! Then there is His call to her, "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away." Be wholly for me! He calls her "my dove." She is in the clefts of the rock, and He Himself is that rock, where His people are hidden away and find shelter. He longs for her and she longs for Him. His eyes are upon her, His beloved bride, and her eyes upon Him. Joyfully the bride cries out, as the assurance of His great love stirs her soul, "My Beloved is mine and I am His." Yet the fullness has not yet come. It is all still in blessed anticipation of the time of fullest

manifestation—"until the day dawn and the shadows flee away." Turn my Beloved, she calls to Him, "Be Thou like a gazelle or a young hart," swift in Thy coming, upon the mountains of Bether, the mountains of spices and frankincense, when the time of worship begins.

CHAPTER III.

The scene changes. The bride is now alone and in the darkness of the night. She is seeking her Beloved and is unable to find Him. Her heart is filled with the same love she exhibits in the previous chapter, but the joy and comfort she lacks. We see her walking through the streets and in the broadways, looking for Him whom her soul loveth; she sought Him but found Him not; Then the watchmen of the night which pass through the street came across the seeking one and she eagerly inquires, "Have ye see Him whom my soul loveth?" They have no answer for her; probably they knew not what she meant. No sooner had she passed them by, when she found Him. All this is prophetic, as it reveals the soul exercise of that godly remnant of Israel during the night of tribulation. There is no need of giving a meaning to every detail.

As already stated, His coming described in verses 6–11 is His coming as King Messiah. In the last verse we have the key. "Go forth, daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon, with the crown wherewith His mother crowned Him, in the day of His espousals, and in the day of the gladness of His heart," His mother is Israel. Israel gave birth to Him according to the flesh, as it is also seen in the great vision of the Apocalypse (Rev. xii). In that day when He comes up from the wilderness, like pillars of smoke, in the Shekinah cloud, when He comes the mighty victor, yet the true Solomon, the Prince of Peace, who speaks peace to the nations, His mother Israel will crown Him Lord of all.

CHAPTER IV.

The King, the Bridegroom speaks of her, who is "perfect through His comeliness put upon her" (Ezek. xvi:14). He

tells out all she is in His sight and loving estimation. He has called her from the lions' den, from the mountains of the leopards (verse 8); she has passed through the fires of persecution and tribulation and now His heart expresses His delight in her. There are eight descriptions of her beauty. He tells her, "Behold thou art fair, my love, behold thou art fair." And after the description of the beauty He beholds in her, whom He has brought out of the wilderness and out of the lions' den, He says, "Thou art all fair, my love; and there is no spot in thee." He assures her of His delight in her. It is all His own workmanship; she has not made herself fair without a spot. His grace and power have accomplished it for her. And what is true of the bride-remnant of Israel is also true of the church. In Him we have our completeness and perfection; His own comeliness and glory is bestowed upon us. The happy day is coming for Him and for us when He will present the church to Himself, "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. v:27).

In verses 12–15 we have a beautiful description of the garden, the land of Israel in which His beloved is now planted once more. Here are found the precious fruits, as well as the spikenard and all the trees of frankincense. There is the fountain, the well of living waters; this as well as the north wind and the south wind, typifies the Holy Spirit. And she invites Him to come to His garden. "Let my beloved come into His garden and eat its precious fruit."

CHAPTER V.

The bridegroom answers the invitation extended to Him when the bride had said, "Let my Beloved come into His (not her) garden." He says, "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse." She is both sister and spouse. When He speaks of her as sister, He owns the national relationship. In Matthew xii:46–50 He disowned that relationship, because they rejected the offer of the kingdom, but now it is re-established and the godly portion of Israel

becomes the spouse. In His garden, the product of His love and His death, He finds now His enjoyment, His joy and His satisfaction. He invites others to come and partake. "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, beloved ones."

But there is no response here from the side of the bride. She exhibits slothfulness. He is seen now standing outside; His head is filled with the night dew and standing at the door He knocks (See Rev. iii:20). The comment on this difficult portion of the Song, as given in the Synopsis of the Bible, is especially helpful.

"Alas, what hearts are ours! We turn again to ourselves as soon as we are comforted by the testimony of the Lord's love. The Bridegroom's sensitive and righteous heart acts upon her word, and He retires from one who does not listen to His voice. She arises to learn her own folly, and the just delicacy, with respect to herself, of His ways whom she had slighted. How often, alas! do we act in the same manner with regard to the voice of His Spirit and the manifestations of His love! What a dreadful loss, but, through grace, what a lesson! She is chastised by those who watch for the peace of Jerusalem. What had she to do in the streets at night, she whom the Bridegroom had sought at home? And now her very affection exposes her to reproof, the expression of its energy placing her in a position that proved she had slighted her Beloved. If we are not in the peaceful enjoyment of the love of Christ, where He meets with us in grace, the very strength of our affection and our self-condemnation causes us to exhibit this affection out of its place, in a certain sense, and bring us into connection with those who judge our position. It was right discipline for a watchman to use towards a woman who was wandering without, whatever might be the cause. Testimonies of her affection to her Beloved at home, the love of her own heart, do not concern the watchman. Affection may exist; but *he* has to do with order and a becoming walk. Nevertheless her affection was real and led to an ardent expression of all that her Beloved was to her—an expression addressed to

others, who ought to understand her; not to the watchman, but to her own companions. But if sloth had prevented her receiving Him in the visitations of His love, her heart, now disciplined by the watchman and turned again to her Beloved, overflowing with His praises, being taught of God, knows where to find Him."

The words recorded in verse 9 are no doubt addressed to the bride by the rest of the nation. How beautiful is her answer! She speaks of Him as "the chiefest among ten thousand." Here is symbolical language. White tells us of His holiness; ruddy reminds us of His love, so fully expressed in the shedding of His blood. His cheeks were once smitten; Grace is in His lips; the belly speaks of His bowels of mercy; His eyes are the eyes of love; the gold is the symbol of His Deity; the hair is the symbol of His perfect humanity. After giving ten features of His beauty, she has exhausted herself and in exstacy cries out, as thousands upon thousands in every generation have done, "Yea, He is altogether lovely . . . this is my friend." Blessed are all who can repeat these words and who can say, "This is my friend."

CHAPTER VI.

The description of her Beloved was addressed to the daughters of Jerusalem. Their answer is recorded in the beginning of this chapter. Her outburst of praise, her glowing testimony of Him, created the desire in the hearts of others to become His. "Whither is thy Beloved gone? . . . We will seek Him with thee." The Bride answers and then in words of precious assurance she declares, "I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine."

Then the Bridegroom speaks in loving praise of her. He speaks of that which she is for Him. He owns that remnant as "the only one" of her mother (the nation Israel). Nor is she alone His dove, but she is fair as the moon and clear as the sun; glory covers her and she is like an army with banners displayed.

He went down into the garden, to look at the verdure of the valley, to see if His vine budded, and suddenly, before He is aware, His love makes Him like Ammi-nadib, which means the chariots of my willing people (Psalm cx:3). He leads them forth in triumph and in glory.

CHAPTER VII.

The rapturous outburst in praise of the bride, the saved and glorified remnant of Israel, with which this chapter begins, must not be put into the lips of the bridegroom, the Messiah-King. It is the praise of the daughters of Jerusalem, who now recognize her as the beloved of the King. Her highest confession is found in this chapter. He begins to speak of her with verse 6, "How fair and pleasant art thou, my love, in delights." She answers His expressions of love. "I am my Beloved's, and His desire is toward me." This is the highest—to know she possesseth Him and that His heart's delight is in her. This, too, is our happy knowledge. We know He belongs to us; we are Christ's and in us He has, and finds, His delight. Blessed is the scene with which this chapter closes. He calls on her to go forth with Him into the fields, to go to the vineyards, to see the budding and blossoming, the blooming pomegranates, the choice fruits new and old, all laid up for the beloved.

This takes us into millennial times. It will be the time of fruit bearing and glory for Him in the fields, in the vineyards, among all the nations of the world. "For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations" (Isa. lxi:11). "Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good and our land shall yield her increase" (Psa. lxxxv:11, 12).

Israel restored in fellowship with the King will share in the fullest sense these coming blessings and glory.

CHAPTER VIII.

The last chapter of the song is a review of the whole. There is unquestionably a recapitulation of the entire book. The bride's desires are once more given to be loved and caressed by Him. For the last time we have the charge to the daughters of Jerusalem and once more the coming is announced. "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness leaning upon her Beloved?" She returns with Him. The Beloved is mentioned seven times in the book. There is the voice of the Beloved (ii:8); the call of the Beloved (ii:10); claiming the Beloved (ii:16); opening the Beloved (v:5); praising the Beloved (v:9–16); leaning on the Beloved (viii:5) and longing for the Beloved (viii:14).

Here again the apple tree is found. (See ii:3.) It is Christ. There the Lord awoke her and manifested Himself to her." From Christ alone she derives her life. Thus only can Israel give birth to this remnant, which, at Jerusalem, shall become the earthly bride of the great King, which desires to be, and shall be, as a seal upon His heart, according to the power of a love that is strong as death, that spares nothing and yields nothing." The little sister of verse 8 has been interpreted as meaning Ephraim, the ten tribes, who will then also come into remembrance and blessing. Solomon's vineyards at Baal-hamon (master of multitudes) points clearly to the converted nations in the millennium and then His own vineyard. Israel is mentioned in verse 12.

The Song of Songs ends with a prayer, "Haste my Beloved, and be Thou like a gazelle or a young hart upon the mountain of spices." Thus the remnant of Israel will plead in the future, that He may come and be manifested in His glory; but the bride of Christ, the Church, prays, "Even so, Come Lord Jesus."

In conclusion, we mention the attempt made by some, to trace in this Song of Songs the entire history of the church. We give the divisions made for those who desire to examine this interpretation. John the Baptist's Ministry is claimed to be covered by chapters ii:8-iii:5. The Ministry

of the Lord Jesus on earth is traced in chapters iii:6-v:1. From the agony in Gethsemane to the conversion of Samaria is thought to be in chapters v:2-viii:5. Then chapter viii:5–14 is said to be a picture of the times when the Gentiles were first called to the Revelation and the Coming of the Lord.

We think the safest interpretation is that which holds closely to the Jewish meaning, as we have done in these brief annotations.

ISAIAH

The Prophet Isaiah

Introduction.

The opening verse of this great Book gives us information concerning the prophet Isaiah and the period covered by his official ministry. "The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, Kings of Judah." Of his personal history we know but little. Jewish tradition claims that he was related to King Uzziah. That he must have come from a prominent family may be gathered from the fact that he had ready access into the presence of the Kings of Judah, Ahaz and Hezekiah, and probably also the others. That he was married we learn from the book. He had two sons which bore prophetic names. The one was Shear-Jashub ("a remnant shall return"), prophetically indicating that God would leave a remnant of His people. The second son was Maher-shalal-hash-baz, which means "hasting to the spoil, hurrying to the prey," prophetic of the coming and threatening invasion of Assyria.

Nothing else is said of his personal history in the book which bears his name nor do we find anything about his death. There is a trustworthy tradition that he lived during the reign of Manasseh, also that he suffered martyrdom, because he reproved the vices and idolatries rampant during the reign of that wicked king. This tradition says that the mode of his death was by being sawn asunder, (See Hebrews xi:37 which, in case this tradition is true, would apply to Isaiah.) Josephus, the great Jewish historian, speaks of the cruel persecutions under the reign of Manasseh in the following words: "He barbarously slew all the righteous men that were among the Hebrews; nor would he spare the prophets, for he every day slew some of them, till Jerusalem was overflowed with blood."

The Times of Isaiah.

Isaiah lived during the eighth century before Christ. This is fully confirmed by the chronology of the kings of Judah mentioned in the first verse of the book. To understand fully the prophecies which he made in the name of Jehovah, a good knowledge of the times in which he lived and acted as Jehovah's mouthpiece is eminently necessary. We shall enter into it a little more fully to help the student of this book.

Isaiah must have lived to a very old age, for it is quite certain that for fully seventy years he exercised his God-given office. Two hundred and forty years before Isaiah the kingdom of Israel had been divided, after Solomon's apostasy. The glory had departed from both the kingdom of Israel or Samaria (also called Ephraim), and the kingdom

of Judah. Both had been greatly affected by civil wars and conflicts with other nations. The kingdom of Israel sunk deeper and deeper, ruled over by a number of depraved kings, who plunged the people into the grossest idolatries with the accompanying immoralities, so that God's righteous judgment fell upon it first. During the prophetic ministry of our prophet the judgment fell on the ten tribe kingdom of Israel. About the year 736 B. C., Tiglath-Pileser, the Assyrian king, had killed Rezin, the king of Damascus, with whom Pekah the king of Samaria had made an alliance. Tiglath-Pileser then invaded the northern kingdom of Iarael, took many cities in Gilead and Galilee and carried the inhabitants into his own country. (See 2 Kings xvi:5-9; Amos i:5, etc.) This was the first captivity of Israel. The rest of the inhabitants of Samaria, the kingdom of the ten tribes, were carried away by the successor of Tiglath-Pileser, that is Shalamaneser. (Read about this in 2 Kings xvii:3-18 1 Chronicles v:26, and Hosea xiii:16.) Now, Isaiah's home was in Jerusalem, the capital of the kingdom of Judah, and he witnessed from there the calamity which had come upon the ten tribes.

Isaiah began his ministry under the reign of Uzziah. He was a good king, a worshipper of the Lord, yet he did not remove the places of idolatrous worship. He had a sad end (2 Kings xv:1-5). He is also called Azariah. Chapter vi in Isaiah tells us that he had his great vision in the year when this king died of leprosy.

The son of Uzziah, Jotham, reigned in his stead. He did not trouble himself about the high places and the idolatrous groves, and the condition of the nation was that of corruption (2 Kings xv:32-36). He built cities, castles and towns; he prepared for war in time of peace. The ancient Assyria had seen its end with Sardanapulus and in its place arose the two kingdoms of Assyria and Babylonia. Babylonia soon took the lead and Assyria was joined to the Chaldean monarchy. The dissolution of the great Assyrian monarchy took place during the reign of Jotham, yet we have not evidence that Isaiah uttered a definite prophecy during the reign of Jotham. He probably did, but we cannot locate it in the book.

Then came Ahaz, the twelfth king of Judah. He was an ungodly ruler and his reign was marked by disaster. (See 2 Chronicles xxviii; 2 Kings xvi.) In idolatry such as burning incense in the valley of Hinnom, and burning his children in the fire of idol worship, he was as wicked, or almost so, as his grandson Manasseh. As a punishment the Lord sent the kings of Syria and Samaria against him. In one day Pekah the king of Syria killed a large number of Jews and took 200,000 captive. They were only saved from deportation by the intercession of the prophet Obed. The full record of this is found in 2 Chronicles xxviii. Then Ahaz trembled before this strong alliance and resolved in calling in the aid of the Assyrian.

It was at that time that prophet and king met at the waterworks as recorded in chapter vii. The prophet assured the wicked monarch that Jerusalem had nothing to fear from Syria and Samaria, that Jehovah would protect Jerusalem. He urged Ahaz to ask a sign, which he refused to do. Then the Lord gave him a sign, that of the virgin who should conceive and bring forth a son and call his name Emmanuel. It is a prediction concerning the virgin birth of Israel's Redeemer-King, the Son of God. The thought is this; How can Jerusalem and Judah perish as long as He, the Messiah, David's Son and David's Lord, has not come? Isaiah also told the king that the menace then threatening would be speedily removed, but that his alliance with the Assyrian would bring disaster. But Ahaz, though he saw the fulfillment of the prophecy concerning the kings of Syria and Samaria, did not heed the warning. When an invasion of the Edomites and Philistines threatened (2 Chronicles xxviii:17, etc.), he turned again to his old ally, the king of Assyria. He made him costly presents. Tiglath-Pileser, as already stated above, conquered the kings of Syria and Samaria. Ahaz visited his heathen friend and ally in Damascus, and when he saw there a beautiful altar, he sent a model of it to Urijah, the priest, in Jerusalem, who constructed one like it, and afterward Ahaz used it to commit idolatry and all the abominations which go with it. (See 2 Kings xvi.) But the prophecy about disaster through the Assyrian king was not fulfilled during the lifetime of this wicked king. It came with Sennacherib's invasion during the reign of the next king Hezekiah. He invaded the land but could not touch Jerusalem.

Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz, was the very opposite to his wicked father. He was one of the most godly kings which occupied the throne of David. He started in with overturning the altars of idolatry and cutting down the groves where his predecessors had permitted the wicked religious ceremonies of heathendom. Then the temple was renovated. He also destroyed the brazen serpent which Moses long ago had made, and which had been preserved as an object of idolatry, much as ritualistic Christiandom worships the literal cross of wood or metal. He restored furthermore the observance of Passover. After his successful war with the Philistines, he decided to cast off the yoke of the Assyrian by not paying the tribute which his father Ahaz had promised to pay. Then Sennacherib advanced with a large army and spread ruin in every direction. Hezekiah fortified Jerusalem and prepared for a siege (2 Chronicles xxxii:1-8). Then he sent ambassadors to the Assyrian and sued for peace. Sennacherib demanded a large sum of money and gave him assurance that the army would be withdrawn. (2 Kings xviii:13-15). Hezekiah agreed and stripped even the temple of its treasures to pay the vast sum. Then Sennacherib went down to Egypt but was defeated by Tirhaka, king of Ethiopia. Maddened by the defeat he approached Jerusalem again, and sent messengers

from Lachish and demanded its surrender. Hezekiah then spread the whole matter before the Lord, in the house of the Lord, and received the answer that the city was safe. Isaiah's ministry in all this is found in the historical portion of his book. When Sennacherib dared to advance towards the city, the angel of the Lord slew 185,000 of his men in one night. It must be remembered that a large portion of the prophecies of Isaiah up to chapter xxxix are occupied with these events, and can only be rightly understood in the light of the history of Judah of that period.

Concerning the Authorship of Isaiah.

We have stated before that according to Jewish tradition Isaiah perished by the hands of wicked men in being sawn asunder. Equally wicked men have "sawn him asunder" in a different way. We mean the so-called "Higher or Destructive Critics." Did Isaiah really write this Book? Could it be the work of one man? Are there not evidences of a composite authorship? These and other questions have been raised, and their answers given by men whose boast is of superior scholarship, of greater knowledge than the knowledge of the past generations; men who blasphemously assert that their finite brains have absorbed more knowledge in these matters than the infinite Lord of Glory, the Lord Jesus Christ, possessed in the days of His dwelling on earth.

For some 2,500 years no one ever thought of even suggesting that Isaiah did not write the book which bears his name. The criticism of this book and the denial of this great prophet being the sole author of it is a very modern thing. It started with a man by name of Koppe, who attacked, in 1780, the genuiness of chapter l. He was followed by another theologian who expressed doubt as the Isaiah being the author of chapters xl-lxvi, generally called the second part of Isaiah. Rosenmueller, the notorious Eichorn, the Hebraist Gesenius, Ewald and others took a hand in it in sawing Isaiah asunder, each questioning certain portions of the book. The great Leipzig professor, Franz Delitzsch, also joined the band of "scientific butchers," and declared that the second part of Isaiah is of post-exilic authorship. This was done by him in 1889, and after this with the year 1890 a veritable flood of criticism set in, led, by Canon Driver, George Adam Smith, Duhm, Stade, Hackman, Cornill, Cheyne and many others. Their infidel discoveries have been readily accepted in this country and are now being taught in Methodist colleges, in the Union Theological Seminary of New York, the Chicago University, in Baptist, Presbyterian and other denominational institutions. But let it be said that there are also scholars just as mature as these critics who stand up for the Isaiahan authorship of the whole book. We mention Stier, Weber, Strachey,

Naegelsbach, Barnes, Bodenkamp, Cobb, Benjamin Douglass, Green, Thirtle, and many others.

The critics have invented a Deutero-Isaiah, that is a second Isaiah, who should have written the second part. Then another set of "scholars" with their scientific microscope discovered that this Deutero-Isaiah could not have written everything of this second part; that there was a third, or Trito-Isaiah, who wrote chapter lv-lxvi. They also found out with their scholarship that parts were written in Babylon, and other parts in Palestine. They are still at it, "sawing Isaiah asunder." To mention their methods, their hair-splittings, their philological objections and their claims would fill pages, and we would, if we were to follow it, oblige our readers to examine the inventions of the natural, darkened heart of man, which does not believe in God. There are 1,292 verses in the book of Isaiah. Out of these the ultra critics allow 262 verses to be genuine and the rest, 1,030 verses, are rejected by them.

We repeat here what we say in the studies in Isaiah at the close of our analysis and annotations.

But what does all this mean? It is a denial of what is written in the first verse of this book "The vision of Isaiah, the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah." And if several men wrote this book, if part was written during the Babylonian capitivity and other parts added after the capitivity, then this statement with which the book begins is untrue. This first verse assures us that the book is a whole, that all we find in it is the vision of one man. To deny this breaks down the truthfulness of the book and reduces it to the level of common literature. This is what the critics have done. But the book of Isaiah is quoted in the New Testament. The Jews always believed this book to have been written by Isaiah. They held this belief when our Lord was on the earth. He Himself read in the synagogue of Nazareth from chapter lxi, which the critics deny to be the writing of Isaiah. Quotations from Isaiah are frequently found in different parts of the New Testament. Twenty-one times we read of Isaiah and his words in the New Testament. The phrases used are the following: "Spoken by the Prophet Esaias;" "Fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias;" "Well did Esaias Prophesy;" "In the Book of the Words of Esaias;" "As said the Prophet;" "These things said Esaias;" "Well spake the Holy Spirit by Esias;" "Esaias also saith;" "Esaias saith." This is evidence enough that the Lord and the Holy Spirit through the Evangelists and the Apostle Paul set their seal to this uncontradicted and unanimous belief that Isaiah wrote this book. The critics by their methods impeach the testimony of the Lord Himself or charge the infallible Lord of Glory to have been limited in His knowledge and that He acquiesced

in the current traditional belief of the Jewish people, knowing better Himself.

All the arguments of the critics are disproven by the book itself. One only needs to study this book and the careful study will bring out the unanswerable fact of the unity of the book of Isaiah. Only one person could have written such a book and that person did not write it by himself, but was the mouthpiece of Jehovah. This is the conclusion of an intelligent and spiritual study of the book itself. The silly and arbitrary restrictions the critics make, that Isaiah could not have written certain passages, because it was beyond his horizon, or that he could not have mentioned Cyrus, the Persian king, by name, over 150 years before he was born, springs from the subtle infidelity which is at the bottom of the destructive criticism, which denies the supernatural altogether.

The Message of Isaiah.

The name Isaiah means "Jehovah saves" or "Jehovah is salvation." He has well been called the evangelical prophet. There are more direct quotations as well as indirect allusions to this great book in the N. T. than from any other prophetic book. Josephus relates that Cryus, the Persian king, was greatly moved by the reading of the book of Isaiah, one of the evidences, that Isaiah was not compiled after the exile. In the passage where Josephus speaks of the edict issued by Cryus permitting the Jews to return, he says: "This was known to Cyrus by his reading the book which Isaiah left behind him of his prophecies; for this prophet has said that God had spoken thus to him in a secret vision, 'My will is that Cyrus, whom I have appointed to be king over many and great nations, send back my people to their own land, and build my temple.' This was foretold by Isaiah 140 years before the temple was demolished. Accordingly, when Cyrus read this and admired the divine power, an earnest desire and ambition came upon him to fulfill what was so written." The early church held Isaiah in great esteem and recognized its great message. When Augustine had been converted he asked Ambrose which book he would advise him to study first. Ambrose told him, "The prophesies of Isaiah." All the great men of God, the instruments of the Spirit of God like Luther, Calvin, Knox and others acknowledged the greatness of this book and its message.

What Peter says as to the contents of the writings of the Prophets of God is more true of Isaiah than of any of the other prophetic books except the Psalms. "The Suffering of Christ and the Glory that should follow." Isaiah's message reveals the Redeemer and King of Israel. He is the "Holy One of Israel" mentioned by this title twenty-five times. The Redeemer of Israel is Jehovah the Creator. He announced His virgin birth, the child to be born of the virgin, the son given, and reveals the titles of that Son (ix:6). He describes Him in

His lowliness, His tenderness, His miracles, as the servant of Jehovah, and above all as the sin-bearer in that wonderful fifty-third chapter. But how much more Isaiah was permitted to reveal of His glory! He pictures in prophetic vision that kingdom which is yet to come, and which will come with the return of our Saviour-Lord. The details of His coming, His glory and His kingdom are unfolded in the special lecture on this subject which the reader finds with the other lectures at the close of the annotations.

Another great message are the predictions of future glories for and blessings for Israel, Jerusalem and the nations. These have been grouped by us in the third lecture on Isaiah under the following heads: (1) Israel's Restoration to their Land, (2) Israel's Spiritual Blessings, (3) The Blessings for the Land, (4) The Future of Jerusalem, (5) The Future Blessings of the Nations, (6) The Blessings for all Creation.

The Division and Scope of Isaiah

The Book is an organic whole which proves that it can never be the piecemeal work of a number of men who assumed the name of Isaiah. That the language of the second part differs so much from the style of the first is no argument against the unity of the book at all. The style changes according to the character of the prophecy. "His style is suited to the subject and changeth with it. In his denunciations and threatenings, he is earnest and vehement; in his consolations, he is mild and insinuating. He so lives in the events he describes that the future becomes to him as the past and present" (Hengstenberg). If we believe that Isaiah was but the mouthpiece of Jehovah, that he wrote under the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit, as He moved him and put the words into his pen, all difficulties disappear. But as we have already stated the scope of the book is conclusive evidence of both, the inspiration of the book and its Isaiahic authorship.

There are two great sections first of all. The one, chapters i:xxxv, contains the earlier prophecies. Chapter xl-lxvi the later prophecies. Between these two portions is a historical parenthesis contained in chapters xxxvi-xxxix.

In the earlier prophecies judgments are announced upon Jerusalem, Judah and upon nations, while blessings of the future are also given, but they take a secondary place. In the later prophecies we likewise read of judgments but the major portion reveals the glories and blessings of the future.

In the earlier prophecies the Assyrian invasion as it took place is announced, giving at the same time a prophetic forecast of a future invasion from the north in the time of the end. In the later prophecies the Assyrian is no longer mentioned. The Babylonian captivity announced in the thirty-ninth chapter is seen by the prophet as past and he predicts the return and beyond that the return of the rem-

nant from the greater dispersion and the final glory of the kingdom with the coming of the King.

We shall now give the scope and division of these books.

I. THE EARLIER PROPHECIES.

1. **Chapter i-xii. Prophecies under the Reign of Uzziah, Jotham and Ahaz.**
2. **Chapters xiii-xxvii. The Judgment of the Nations and the Future Day of Jehovah.**
3. **Chapters xxviii-xxxv. The Six Woes. Judgment Ruins and Restoration Glories.**

Each section of the earlier prophecies foretells great judgments but each section ends with the vision of a re-gathered and restored people.

THE HISTORICAL PARENTHESIS.

Chapters xxxvi-xxxix.

II. THE LATER PROPHECIES.

Chapter xl-lxvi.

1. **Chapters xl-xlviii. In Babylon. Deliverance Promised through Cyrus.**
2. **Chapters xlix-lvii. The Servant of Jehovah; His Suffering and His Glory.**
3. **Chapters lviii-lxvi. Jewish History in the Endtime; The Glory of Israel and of the Coming Age.**

Each section begins with a chapter which is the key to the whole section. Each concludes with a description of the two classes which compose the nation especially in the last days, and that there is no peace for the wicked but punishment.

Analysis and Annotations

The reader will find that every chapter has been analyzed as to its contents. We have not made copious annotations, because the three lectures on the Book of Isaiah as found at the close of the analysis cover the contents of this book in such a manner that detailed annotations for a study of the book can be omitted. We suggest that all who desire to study this great prophecy in a closer way read carefully the introduction, and after that the three lectures on "The Scope of Isaiah," "The Messianic Predictions" and "Future Glories and Blessings." These lectures should be carefully studied and every passage should be looked up. After this has been done, take up the book section by section and follow the analysis we give and consult the lectures whenever needed.

I. THE EARLIER PROPHECIES.

Chapters viii:i-xxxv.

I. CHAPTER viii: i-xii. PROPHECIES UNDER THE REIGN OF UZZIAH, JOTHAM AND AHAZ.

Chapter I.

The Title of the Book and Contents. Verse 1.
The Moral and Religious Decline of the Nations. Verses 2-15.

Jehovah's Exhortation and Appeal. Verses 16-20.
The Result of Obstinate Refusal. Verses 21-24
The Promise of Restoration. Verses 25-31.

The promised restoration of Jerusalem is still future. The "afterward" when the earthly Jerusalem is to be called "The City of Righteousness" refers to the Second Coming of Christ. Compare with Jeremiah xxxiii:14-26.

Chapter II. Zion's Future Glory and the Day of Jehovah.

The Glories in the Latter Days. Verses 1-4.
Exhortation to Walk in the Light. Verse 5.
The Corruption of the People. Verses 6-9.
The Day of Jehovah. Verses 10-22.

The vision of verses 1-4 is altogether future. When Israel is converted and in possession of the land, when once more a house of Jehovah will stand in Israel's land, then this great prediction will be fulfilled. Compare with Micah iv:1-5. The Day of the Lord (Jehovah) is the day of His visible manifestation to deal with the earth in judgment. Compare with Isaiah xxiv, etc., Zephaniah i.

Chapter III. Judgments upon the rulers and the daughters of Zion.

The Judgment Against the Rulers. Verses 1-7.
Jerusalem's sad Condition. Verses 8-9.
Jehovah's Message. Verses 10-15.
The Worldliness of the Daughters of Zion. Verses 16-23.
Their Humiliation in Judgment. Verses 24; iv:1.

This chapter describes the corrupt conditions among the professing people of God in Isaiah's day. A similar corruption and worldliness prevailing in our age demands divine judgment.

Chapter IV. Zion's future Cleansing and Glory.

Israel Regathered and Cleansed. Verses 2-4.
Jehovah's Visible Glory Revealed. Verses 5-6.

The Branch of the Lord (Jehovah) is the Lord Jesus Christ. After judgment has been executed cleansing is promised and Glory is established on Mount Zion.

Chapter V. The Song of the Vineyard and the Six Woes.

The Song of the Vineyard. Jehovah's Lament. Verses 1-4.
The Judgment Upon the Vineyard. Verses 5-7.
The Wild Grapes. Verses 8-23.
First Woe Against Covetousness. Verses 8-10.
Second Woe Against Fleshy Lusts. Verses 11-17.
Third Woe Against Mockers. Verses 18-19.
Fourth Woe Against Moral Insensibility. Verse 20.
Fifth Woe Against Conceit. Verse 21.
Sixth Woe Against Lawlessness. Verses 22-23.
Jehovah's Anger. The Invader Announced. Verses 24-30.

Compare the song of the Vineyard with Matthew xxi:33-44. The wild grapes of Israel fully correspond to the wild grapes of nominal Christendom. "If God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee." (Rom. xi:21.)

Chapter VI. The Prophet's Vision and New Commission.

The Time of the Vision. Verse 1.
Jehovah of Hosts. Verses 2-4.
The Prophet's Woe. Verse 5.
The Cleansing. Verses 6-7.
"Here Am I. Send Me." Verse 8.
The New Commission. Verses 9-10.
The Limitation of the Judgment. Verses 11-13.

Note the eight steps: vision, conversion, self-judgment, cleansing, self-surrender, communion, commission, intercession. This vision is the glory of Christ (John xii:41). The fulfilment of the hardening judgment of the nation, the blinding of their eyes did not set in completely in Isaiah's day. Study carefully Matt. xiii:14-15; John xii:39-41; Acts xxviii:25-27.

However, Israel's blindness is not permanent.

Chapter VII. The Prophet before King Ahaz.

The King in Trouble. Verses 1-2.
Isaiah Sent and His Message. Verses 3-9.
A Sign Offered and Refused. Verses 10-12.
The Sign: The Virgin Birth. Verses 13-16.
The Advent of the Assyrian. Verses 17-25.

Study carefully the historic setting of this chapter and 2 Chronicles xxviii:1-27. See lecture on "Messianic Predictions." In verse 14 the virgin birth of Christ is announced. Much of the controversy is around the word "virgin"(**almah**), which the critics declare does not mean a virgin, but a young married woman. However, they err. In Genesis xxiv:43, Exod. ii:8, Psalm lxviii:21, Song of Sol. i:3, etc., the same word is used, and it means "virgin" in these and other passages. The Septuagint,a Greek translation of the Old Testament made some 300 years B. C., translates the Hebrew **"almah"** with **"pardenos,"** the Greek for virgin. Matthew i:22 confirms this Messianic prediction.

Chapter VIII. Jehovah's Word through Isaiah. The Assyrian announced.

The Divine Instruction and Maher-shalal-hash-baz. Verses 1-4.
The Assyrian to Come. Verses 5-8.
The Answer of Faith. Verses 9-10.
A Word to the Faithful Remnant. Verses 11-20.
The Coming Great Distress. Verses 21-22.

The names are significant. Isaiah heard the word "Maher-shalal-hash-baz," and then is told to call his newborn son by this name. The name means "Swift for spoil, hasty for prey." Isaiah's other son was named "Shear Jashub," which means "a remnant shall return." The names of the sure witnesses are equally full of meaning. Urijah (Jehovah is light), Zechariah (Jehovah remembers), Jeberechiah (Blessed of Jehovah).

Verses 14 and 15 are deeply interesting. It is the rejection of Immanuel, Christ. Compare with chapter xxviii:16 and read the following passages: Luke ii:34, xx:18; Matthew xxi:44; Rom. ix:32, 33; 1 Pet. ii:8.

Also note the quotation of verse 18 in Hebrews ii:13. The great distress is a description of what awaits apostate Israel.

Chapter IX. The Message of Hope concerning Israel's future. The impending judgments.

The Messiah, His Name, His Rule, His Kingdom. Verses 1-7.
Judgment Upon Israel. Verses 8-12.
The Impenitent Nation. Verses 13-17.
The Wrath of Jehovah. Verses 18-21.
Unrighteous Judges and Three Questions. X:1-4.

Matthew iv:12-16 quotes the opening verses of this chapter. This applies to His double advent. The first and second coming of the Lord are wonderfully blended together in verses 6-7. The nation in impenitence and God's wrath against them has had its past and present fulfilment. It is not yet exhausted. It looks forward to the coming day of wrath.

Chapter X. The Assyrian; his invasion of Immanuel's land; his end.

The first four verses belong to the preceding chapter.
A Description of the Assyrian Enemy. Verses 5-11.
The Overthrow of His Army Announced. Verses 12-15.
The Punishment. Verses 16-19.
The Return of the Remnant. Verses 20-23.
The Faithful Remnant Comforted. Verses 24-27.
The Assyrians March Against Jerusalem. Verses 28-32.
Jehovah's Intervention. Verses 33-34.

This is an interesting and important chapter. The Assyrian enemy was used by God to punish his people. In chapters vii and viii his coming was announced. In this chapter we read a fuller description of this great troubler and how he invaded the land of Israel. God addresses him as the rod He uses in anger against His people. While all this had a past fulfilment a similar invasion of the land of Palestine will be enacted before the times of the Gentiles close and the King of Kings appears. The Assyrian of the end time comes from the North; therefore he is called in Daniel's prophecy "the King of the North." Antiochus Epiphanes is a type of this final outward foe of Israel. Study carefully with

this chapter Is. xiv:24-25; Is. xxx:31-33; Micah v:1-7; Daniel viii:23-26; xi:40-45; Psalm lxxiv:1-10; Psalm lxxxix. Jehovah shall suddenly make an end of him. Verses 33-34 compare with Daniel xi:45.

Chapter XI. The Coming King and His Kingdom.

The King: Who He is. What He Will do. Verses 1-5.
The Peace and Blessing He brings. Verses 6-10.
The Gathering of Scattered Israel. Verses 11-16.

It is a great vision of the future which this chapter unfolds. The critics deny that the blessed Person mentioned in the opening verses is our Lord Jesus. They think Hezekiah or Josiah is meant. 2 Thess. ii:8 shows that it is our Lord. Link verses 1-5 with chapter ix:6-7. Again His coming in humiliation and His coming in exaltation are here interwoven. We behold His reign in righteousness. Verses 6-10 need not to be spiritualized, as it is so often done. Romans tells us (viii:18-23) that a literal groaning creation, travailing together in pain until now, will be delivered of its groans and curses. The hour of deliverance strikes with the "manifestation of the Sons of God." However, this manifestation does not take place till the Lord is manifested the second time. In the coming Kingdom to be established on earth and ruled over by the King from above, creation will be put back into its original condition.

Israel's regathering will be from a worldwide dispersion. It will be "the second time." It does not and cannot mean the return from Babylon, but the return from their present exile of almost 2,000 years.

Chapter XII. Israel's Salvation Hymn.

When Israel Will Sing. Verse 1.
What Israel Will Sing. Verses 2-3.
To Whom Israel Will Sing. Verses 4-5.
The Holy One in the Midst. Verse 6.

It is Israel's future song of Praise for salvation. Read in this light what a wonderful meaning this little

chapter has. The song will be sung by the delivered and blessed remnant "in that day." In what day? When the Lord arises to judge; when He is manifested in His Glory; when He brings back the captivity of His people.

Section 2.

The Judgment of the Nations and the future day of Jehovah (Chapters XIII-XXVII).

Chapter XIII. The Burden of Babylon.

Jehovah's Call to the Judgment of Babylon. Verses 1-5.
The Day of Jehovah. When Babylon Falls. Verses 6-16.
Babylon Overthrown.

The great judgments announced in this part of Isaiah were only partially fulfilled in the past. The great Babylon which came into existence as the mistress of the world after this prophecy had been given, fell by the Medes (verse 17 and Daniel v). The judgment of this Babylon is meant here first. But the Babylon of the past is the type of a Babylon of the future, another mistress of the ecclesiastical and commercial world. It is yet to appear in its final form (Rev. xvii and xviii). Its fall comes in the day of the Lord. This great day is described in verses 6-16 in this chapter.

Chapter XIV. Israel's Restoration and blessing after Babylon is fallen. The Burden of Philistia.

Israel's Restoration and Exaltation. Verses 1-2.
The Proverb Against the King of Babylon. Verses 3-11.
The Triumph Over Lucifer. (Satan.) Verses 12-20.
Babylon's Destruction. Verses 21-23.
The Assyrian Broken. Verses 24-27.
The Burden of Philistia. Verses 28-32.

When the last great Babylon is overthrown the Lord will remember His people and Jerusalem in mercy. He will then set His people in rest in their own land. The King of Babylon here in this chapter is not Nebuchad-

nezzar, nor his grandson Belshazzar, but the final great King of Babylon. It is the little horn of Daniel vii. The great political head of the restored Roman empire. Behind this final King of the times of the Gentiles looms up Satan, who energized that wicked and false king. The description of him who was "Lucifer," the light-bearer, and his fall is of deep interest.

Chapter XV. The Burden of Moab.

The Destruction Announced. Verses 1-9.

Chapter XVI. The Burden of Moab continued.

God's Call to Moab to Repent. Verses 1-5.
Moab's Pride and Judgment. Verses 6-14.

The xv and xvi chapters form one prophecy. Moab's land bordered on the land of Israel. The historical facts concerning Moab may be studied and followed through the following passages: 1 Sam. xiv:47; 2 Sam. viii:2; 2 Kings i:1; iii:4; 2 Chronicles xx; 2 Kings xiii:20; xiv:25. Moab's sin and judgment are frequently mentioned by the Prophets. See Amos ii:1-3. A great past judgment of Moab's is described in xv:1-16. The call in chapter xvi:1 to send a lamb has nothing to do with Him who is "the lamb of God." The exhortation becomes clear by reading 2 Sam. viii:2 and 2 Kings iii:4, 5. Christ, however, is in view in verse 5, chapter xvi. A remnant of Moab is to be left and in the time of the end we find Moab mentioned again. Read Isaiah xi:14 and Daniel xi:41. The final ruin of Moab is described in Isaiah xxv:10-12.

Chapter XVII. The Burden of Damascus and Judgment upon Ephraim.

Damascus to be a Ruinous Heap. Verses 1-3.
Judgment Upon Ephraim. Verses 4-11.
Woe to the Enemies of Israel. Verses 12-14.

Damascus was the ancient city of Syria, mentioned for the first time in Gen. xv. Syria and Ephraim had

made common cause against the house of David. Tiglath-pileser, King of Assyria, executed the judgment upon Damascus and made of it a ruinous heap. But the judgment is also future. And the enemies of Israel, which trouble His people, will be troubled "in that day." It is a solemn word with which this chapter closes, "This is the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us."

Chapter XVIII. When Israel Will be Brought Back.

The Land beyond the Rivers of Ethiopia. Verse 1.
The Ambassadors Sent. Verse 2.
The Trumpet Blown; Jehovah's Message. Verses 3-6.
Israel Retored to Mount Zion. Verse 7.

An interesting prophecy concerning a nation of great power, which will be used in the bringing back of God's ancient people.

Chapter XIX. The Burden of Egypt.

The Judgment Announced. Verses 1-15.
Egypt Blest with Israel in the Last Days. Verses 16-25.

Egypt has passed through many judgments. Hundreds of years after the divine predictions had been given the Word of the Lord was accomplished. The final judgment upon Egypt comes in that day when the Lord appears in visible glory. Egypt will come, like other nations, to the front once more at the close of the times of the Gentiles. But mercy is also in store for Egypt. Egypt will be called "His people." When the Lord smites Egypt that land will return to Him. It will then be lifted out of the dust and receive a place of blessing only second to that which Israel will enjoy.

Chapter XX. The Near-Punishment of Egypt by Assyria.

Isaiah Walks Naked and Barefooted. Verses 1-2.
The Meaning of His Action.
Egypt Punished by Assyria. Verses 3-6.

A strong party in Jerusalem looked to Egypt for help from the threatening Assyrian invasion. This prophecy shows the utter hopelessness of expecting help from Egypt. The victory of Assyria over Egypt is predicted.

Chapter XXI. The Burdens of the Desert of the Sea; of Dumah and Arabia.

The Burden of the Desert of the Sea (Babylon). Verses 1-10.
The Burden of Dumah. Verses 11-12.
The Burden Upon Arabia. Verses 13-17.

The fall of Babylon is predicted, for Media is mentioned. This event was over two centuries in the future. Isaiah beholds the Persian hosts advancing. Such is prophecy, "history written in advance."

Chapter XXII. The Burden of the Valley of Vision (Jerusalem).

Jerusalem's Deplorable State. Verses 1-4.
The Invading Armies. Verses 5-7.
The Siege and the Calamity. Verses 8-14.
Shebna. Verses 15-19.
Eliakim. Verses 20-25.

This is another intensely interesting prophecy. Jerusalem has passed through many sieges and at last in part the prophecy has been fulfilled. But there is another siege of Jerusalem impending. It will come after the message of the fall of the final Babylon. See Zechariah xiv. Still more interesting are Shebna and Eliakim, mentioned in this chapter. Shebna, the proud one, is the usurper, the type of the Antichrist. Eliakim is the type of Christ, He whose right it is to reign. It is Christ displacing Antichrist, which is seen in verses 15-25. Compare xx:22 with Rev. iii:7.

Chapter XXIII. The Burden of Tyre.

Tyre's Great Disaster. Verses 1-5.
The Complete Overthrow. Verses 6-14.
Tyre's Future Restoration and Degradation. Verses 15-18.

Tyre typifies the commercial expansion and glory of the world. Behind this commercial glory stands Satan, the god of this age. Read Ezekiel xxviii:11-19. Nebuchadnezzar carried out judgment upon Tyre (Ex. xxix: 17-18). A revival of Tyre is also predicted. We call attention to a statement in the beautiful Forty-fifth Psalm, a millennial Psalm. When the King appears, surrounded by His own, "the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift" (Ps. xlv:12). It is what is indicated in Isaiah's vision, "And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord."

Chapter XXIV. The Day of Jehovah.

Jehovah Dealing with the Earth. Verse 1.
All Classes Affected. Verse 2.
The Desolations Described. Verses 3-12.
The Jewish Remnant During the Trouble. Verses 13-20.
The Punishment of the High Ones and Kings. Verses 21-22.
Jehovah's Reign in Mount Zion and Jerusalem. Verse 23.

A marvellous chapter. Not a word of it has ever been fulfilled. The great day of Jehovah is that day of which Isaiah speaks in chapter ii, Zephaniah in chapter i, Zechariah in chapters xii-xiv and every other prophet. It is the day of 2 Thess. i:7-10.

Notice that chapters xxiv-xxvii are a continuous prophecy. To break them into chapters has been a mistake. Study the phrase "in that day." Find what Jehovah will do in the day of His manifestation. He will judge and He will bless. Singing begins in that day.

The high ones in verse 21 are the wicked spirits in the heavenly places (Ephesians vi). The Kings on earth are the Kings mentioned in Psalm ii and Rev. xix:19. Their visitation after many days will be a visitation of judgment and not of blessing.

Chapter XXV. Israel's Praise and the Blessings of the Kingdom.

The Praise of the Delivered Nation. Verses 1-5.
The Blessing for All Nations During the Kingdom. Verses 6-8.

Israel Rejoicing After Waiting. Verse 9.
Moab and Israel's Enemies Judged. Verses 10-12.

In the foreground of this chapter stands another hymn of praise, which redeemed Israel will sing in "that day." Jehovah has done wonderful things for His people. Compare with chapter xii:5; Psalm xlvi: 8-9, etc.

The blessings for all nations are described in verses 6-8. The mountain is Zion. Isaiah iv:5-6. Psalm cxxxii:13-14. From there the streams of blessing will gush forth. Then "all the ends of the earth shall remember, and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee" (Ps. xxii:27). Darkness will be removed and all tears wiped away. All this does not relate to the eternal state, but to conditions on the earth.

Chapter XXVI. Judah's Glory Song.

Praise for Jehovah's Faithfulness and Mercies. Verses 1-6.
The Experiences of Waiting During the Night. Verses 7-11.
The Assurance of Peace and Deliverance. Verses 12-18.
Assurance of Restoration and Preservation. Verses 19-21.

We call attention to verses 12-21. Annihilationists base upon these words the evil doctrine that the wicked are not raised, but destroyed. The fact, however, is that verses 13 and 14 do not teach a physical resurrection. The teaching is that the lordship of other nations over Israel is forever gone. No other lords will ever rise again to domineer over Israel.

Death and resurrection are often used in the Old Testament as symbols of Israel's national death and national resurrection. See Hosea vi:2; Ezek. xxxvii; Dan. xii:2 and verse 19 of the present chapter.

Chapter XXVII. Israel's Enemies Overthrown and the Great Restoration.

Assyria, Babylon and Egypt Punished. Verse 1.
What Jehovah Has Done and Will Do. Verses 2-11.

The Vineyard Established.
The Glorious Consummation. Verses 12-13.

This is a fitting finale to the second section of this book. Israel's chief enemies are indicated by the leviathan, the serpent and the dragon. Behind them stands the serpent and the dragon, Satan. When these enemies are overthrown and Satan is bound then "Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit."

The last word tells of Israel's literal regathering under the blowing of the trumpet (Matt. xxiv:31) and their future worship in Jerusalem. The ending of the first and second sections are alike. They reveal Israel's future glory and blessing.

Section 3. Chapters XXVIII-XXXV.

The Six Woes of the Prophet. Judgment Ruins and Restoration Glories to Come.

Chapter XXVIII. The First Woe. The Message of Assurance.

Ephraim Addressed. Verses 1-6.
Jerusalem Equally Corrupt and Guilty. Verses 7-8.
The Prophet Mocked. Verses 9-10.
The Prophet's Answer. Verses 11-13.
Their Covenant with Death. Verses 14-15.
The Message of Assurance. Verses 16-22.
How Jehovah Judges. Verses 23-29.

The first woe is directed against the ten tribes, Ephraim. The judgment is that which fell upon them through the invasion of Sennacherib. Yet glory is also in store for the scattered, so-called, lost tribes. A remnant will return. Verse 5 describes this glory.

The prophecy here and in the subsequent chapters was not by any means fulfilled when the Assyrian came into Israel's land. Its greater fulfilment is in the future, when the Assyrian once more invades Israel's land. See chapter x. The covenant with death and

agreement with hell (verse 15) must be compared with Daniel ix:27. It is the time when the apostate Jewish nation enters into a covenant with the coming prince and worships Antichrist. This verse and the message from the Lord in verses 16-22 are deeply interesting.

Chapter XXIX. The Second Woe Against Ariel and the Third Woe.

The Fall of Ariel (Jerusalem) Predicted. Verses 1-4.
Their Enemies Dealt with by Jehovah. Verses 5-8.
The People's Condition: Blinded and Religious Formalists. Verses 9-14.
The Third Woe. Verses 15-16.
In that Day. Joy and Blessing for the Meek; Iniquity Punished. Verses 17-24.

Ariel means "the lion of God." It is one of the names of Jerusalem. A great siege of Jerusalem is predicted. Neither Sennacherib's invasion nor the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans accomplished this prophecy. At the end of this age the King of the North (Assyrian) and confederate nations with him will besiege Jerusalem. Of this the chapter gives us the history. Sennacherib's army is a type of the King of the North. Read again chapter x and study with this chapter before us Zech. xii-xiv; Micah. iv:11; v:4-15, and especially the last part of Daniel xi. After that last siege of Jerusalem "that day" will bring blessing for the faithful and punishment for the wicked.

Chapter XXX. The Fourth Woe Against Alliance With Egypt.

The Alliance and Its Failure. Verses 1-7.
The Written Table Against the Rebellious People. Verses 8-14.
Jehovah's Word of Encouragement. Verses 15-17.
The Nation Blest and Restored. Verses 18-21.
Idolatry Ceases; the Land Restored. Verses 22-26.
The Accomplishment by the Coming of the Lord. Verses 27-33.

While this chapter had a significance, like all these

prophetic utterances, for the people in Isaiah's day, its complete revelation can only be grasped in the light of what is yet to come. The Jewish people have never yet possessed the blessings of verses 18-20. These will come as a result of the Second Coming of Christ. See verse 30.

Chapter XXXI. The Fifth Woe Against Them That Go Down to Egypt.

The Egyptian Alliance Condemned Again. Verses 1-3.
Jehovah Promises to Deliver Jerusalem. Verses 4-9.

All looks forward towards the future. It is Jerusalem's glorious future. The Lord will deliver it; He will preserve it (verse 5).

Chapter XXXII. The Coming King and His Kingdom.

The King and His Rule. Verses 1-8.
The Careless Women Addressed. Verses 9-12.
The Judgment of the Land and the City. Verses 13-14.
The Hope of the Future. Verses 15-20.

The connection with the previous chapter is obvious. In chapter xxxi:4-9 the coming of the Lord for the deliverance of His people and the punishment of their enemies is predicted. "So shall the Lord of Hosts come down to fight Mount Zion and the hill thereof." And now in the beginning of chapter xxxii the coming King and His righteous reign is revealed. The King is the Man Christ Jesus, "a hiding place from the wind and a cover from the tempest."

Verses 13-14 describe once more the judgment which rested upon the land and the city. But it is not permanent. "Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high." This great outpouring of the Spirit connected with the restoration of Israel's land has not yet taken place. It comes in that day. Read Joel ii.

Chapter XXXIII. Sixth Woe Against the Assyrian and What is to Follow.

The Judgment Announced. Verse 1.

The Prayer of the Faithful Remnant. Verses 2-6.
The Judgment Executed. Verses 7-13.
The Judge in the Midst of Zion. Verses 14-16.
The King Beheld in His Beauty. Verses 17-23.
Healing and Forgiveness the Result of the Coming of the King. Verse 24.

This is the last mention which is made of the Assyrian apart from the historical chapters. Here again the judgment of the final Assyrian is in view. When the Lord arises and is exalted the judgment of the last great enemy of Israel will be executed. This judgment scene is described in verses 9-13. The prayer of the faithful remnant is recorded in verses 2-6. The remnant is that portion of the nation which holds to Jehovah and His Word in the last days. Their prayer will be answered by the King, whom they shall see in His Beauty. What Zion will be then and what the Lord will be to His earthly people is seen in the rest of the chapter.

Chapter XXXIV. The Day of Jehovah.

Addressed to the World; Jews and Gentiles Involved. Verse 1.
The Shaking of the Earth and the Heavens. Verses 2-9.
The Day of Vengeance. Verses 8-17.

This is one of the darkest chapters in the Bible. A worldwide judgment is described such as has never taken place in the history of the world. The indignation of the Lord is then upon all nations and upon their armies. Like chapter xxiv, it tells of the great judgments to come.

Chapter XXXV. Restoration Glory. The Kingdom.

Creation Blest and the Glory of the Lord Revealed. Verses 1-2.
The Spiritual and Material Blessings of the Kingdom. Verses 3-9.
The Return of the Ransomed of the Lord. Verse 10.

What follows the great judgments of the Day of Je-

hovah, when our Lord Jesus Christ is revealed from heaven in flaming fire, is now brought forward in this final chapter of the first great part of Isaiah's vision. The unscriptural view, that the coming of the Lord in judgment means the complete end of the world, is once more answered. After judgment ruin comes restoration glory. What that glory is we find in this chapter. Read it carefully and also the "Studies in Isaiah" which follow this analysis. The last verse shows the ransomed of the Lord returning to Zion, delivered from sorrow and sighing, filled with joy and singing salvation songs. It is the bringing back to their own land of a delivered people.

A brief word of review. Each section of Part I—Chapters i-xxxv—foretells great judgments. Judgments upon Jerusalem, the Land of Judah, the nations, the whole world. These visions were not at all fulfilled in the past judgments. The day of the Lord ("in that day" ba yom hahu, a phrase so often used by Isaiah) will bring these threatened judgments. But there are the predictions of restoration and blessing, which always follow that day. Each of the three sections end with the vision of a regathered and restored people, brought back to their land. The scope is perfect because it is divine.

The Historical Parenthesis.

Chapters XXXVI-XXXIX.

The center of the Book of Isaiah is a brief but deeply interesting historical account of events during the reign of King Hezekiah. His name is mentioned not less than thirty-one times in these chapters. His great works in reformation and otherwise are recorded in 2 Kings xviii:4-7, 2 Chron. xxix-xxx:5-22, 2 Kings xx:20. From Proverbs xxv:1 we learn that he was a great lover of the Word of God, for he had it copied, perhaps by many scribes. He was 25 years old when he ascended the

throne and reigned 29 years, 727-699 B. C. No doubt he was one of the greatest Kings of Judah.

The events recorded in these chapters are not put together chronologically. The King's sickness, prayer and recovery occurred before the attempts of Sennacherib to take Jerusalem and the subsequent complete overthrow of the Assyrian hosts. This arrangement has its meaning. These historical chapters are designed for an appendix to the earlier prophecies (i-xxxv) and for an introduction to the later prophecies (xl-lxvi). The Assyrian enemy is repeatedly predicted in the earlier prophecies. Indeed he is seen as the enemy of God's people, the rod of God's anger to punish His disobedient people. How the Assyrian came and the angel of the Lord smote the camp is therefore put first, because it is related to the first prophecies of Isaiah. In connection with Hezekiah's pride in chapter xxxix the future Babylonian captivity is announced. The later prophecies look upon the people as in Babylon, assuring the remnant of restoration, not alone from the dispersion in Babylon but the future great restoration, the regathering from all countries.

We give a brief analysis of these four chapters and leave it to the reader to gather up the blessed lessons of confidence in God, dependence upon Him, of prayer, as well as others, in which these chapters abound.

Chapter XXXVI. The Threatening Enemy.

The Assyrian Invasion. Verses 1-3.
Rabshakeh's Mockery. Verses 4-10.
Eliakim, Shebna and Joah's Request. Verse 11.
Rabshakeh's Address in Hebrew Defying God. Verses 12-20.
The Silence of the People. Verse 21.
The Terror of Eliakim, Shebna and Joah. Verse 22.

Chapter XXXVII. Hezekiah in the House of the Lord. Sennacherib's Second Attempt.

Hezekiah's Humiliation. Isaiah Sent for. Verses 1-5.
The Message from the Prophet. Verses 6-7.

Rabshakeh's Letter. Verses 8-13.
Hezekiah's Prayer. Verses 14-20.
The Prayer Answered. Verses 21-35.
The Army of Sennacherib Judged. Verse 36.
The Judgment Upon Sennacherib. Verse 38.

Chapter XXXVIII. Hezekiah's Sickness and Healing.

Isaiah's Startling Message. Verse 1.
Hezekiah's Prayer. Verses 2-3.
The Prayer Heard and the Sign. Verses 4-8.
The King's Sorrow and Joy, a Psalm of Praise. Verses 9-20.
The Remedy for the Recovery. Verses 21-22.

The Message of approaching death startled the King because at that time he had no son. If he had died what then would have become of the Messianic hope through the house of David. Beautiful it is to hear the Lord say through Isaiah, "Thus saith the Lord, the God of David, thy father." Before that Isaiah gave him the message "For I will defend this city to save it for Mine own sake and for My servant David's sake."

Chapter XXXIX. Hezekiah's Self Exaltation.

The Ambassadors of Merodach-baladan. Verse 1.
Hezekiah's Boasting. Verse 2.
Isaiah's Inquiry. Verses 3-4.
The Babylonian Captivity Announced. Verses 5-7.
Hezekiah's Submission and Comfort. Verse 8.

The prediction of Isaiah of the Babylonian captivity, fulfilled through King Nebuchadnezzar about 100 years after these words were spoken, is startling. The reader will bear in mind that the Assyrian was not yet overcome, for the sickness and self exaltation of Hezekiah preceded the judgment of Sennacherib's army. The Assyrian and not Babylon was the threatening enemy. God's Spirit alone could enable him to make such a prediction.

PART II. CHAPTERS XL-LXVI.

The Later Prophecies of Comfort and Glory.

Like the first part this second part of Isaiah has three sections. The three sections of the first part revealed the judgments to come upon the Jewish people, Jerusalem, the nations and the earth. The three sections of the second part reveal the great blessings in store for the people of Israel, Jerusalem, the nations and the earth, after the judgments are passed. These sections give the past, present, and the future history of the Jewish people.

In the first section (xl-xlviii) they are seen prophetically in Babylon, but about to be delivered and brought back to the land. Cyrus is predicted as the chosen instrument. However, this section looks also beyond the return of the remnant from Babylon. Their present dispersion and coming restoration is predicted as well. In the second section (xlix-lvii) we find this period of their history more fully brought forward. In this section the servant of Jehovah is more fully revealed. He came to His own and they received Him not. They hid their faces from Him and esteemed Him not. In consequence of this rejection Israel is not gathered (xlix:5), while those who are afar off, the Gentiles and the isles of the sea, hear of the salvation of God. It is the present age which can be traced in this section. Israel not gathered and the rejected One is given for a light to the nations. The great central figure in this section is the suffering servant of Jehovah (chap. liii).

In the third section we discover their future history. Here we see Him, who suffered, as the victorious King. A remnant is seen back in the land and the Glories and Blessings of the future burst forth in marvelous splendor.

Section I. Chapter XL-XLVIII.

In Babylon. Deliverance Promised through Cyrus.

Babylon is only Mentioned in this Section.

Chapter XL. The Opening Message. Key and Introduction to this Section.

Comfort for His People. Verse 1.
The Voice in the Wilderness. Verses 3-5.
The Prophet's Message. Verses 6-8.
The Message to Zion. Verses 9-11.
The Supremacy of Jehovah. Verses 12-26.
Comfort for Jacob and Israel. Verses 27-31.

The first verses of this chapter are the key and introduction to the entire section. The Lord now speaks in comfort to Jerusalem and announces the pardoning of her iniquity and that in blessing she will receive double for her sins. In verses 3-11 the first and second Coming of Christ are again blended together. John the Baptist was that voice crying in the wilderness (John i:23). Not in Matthew but in Luke Isaiah xl:3-5 is quoted with the exception of verse 5. In its place the Holy Spirit saith, "And all flesh shall see the salvation of God." The Glory of the Lord will be revealed with the second Advent. When that Glory appears Israel is saved, in the meantime the salvation of God is offered to the Gentiles. Jehovah speaks in this chapter of Himself and the evidences that He is God. This is the peculiar feature of the entire section. All is spoken to encourage the faith of His people. Blessed lessons we find here. Verses 27-31, however, will only be fully realized in the future kingdom.

Chapter XLI. Jehovah's Challenge.

The Address to the Islands and the Peoples. Verse 1.
Jehovah's Question. Cyrus and his Ways Predicted. Verses 2-4.

Nations Troubled on Account of Cyrus. Verses 5-7.
Israel as Jehovah's Servant. Verse 8.
The Message of Comfort and Assurance of Restoration. Verses 9-20.
Jehovah's Second Challenge. He Alone can Declare Things to Come. Verses 21-24.
The Future Things Revealed. Verses 25-29.

Cyrus is here mentioned for the first time, though not yet by name. He is in view in verses 2-3 and 25. His work as a mighty conqueror is outlined and the consternation of the surrounding nations on account of it is described. Verses 18-20 go beyond the times of Cyrus. They can only be fulfilled when He who is greater than Cyrus will appear.

Chapter XLII. The True Servant of Jehovah.

The Servant of Jehovah and His Mission. Verses 1-4.
His Future Work Among the Nations. Verses 5-9.
The Future Song of Redemption Glory. Verses 10-13.
Jehovah's Manifestation in Power. Verses 14-17.
The Address of Exhortation to the Deaf and Blind Nation. Verses 18-25.

Matthew's Gospel (xii:20) tells us that this servant is the Lord Jesus Christ. Mark the different phases of His character and work while on earth and His future work when He appears again. The song of redemption glory will be sung only when He is manifested. Israel is seen as a people robbed and spoiled. None saith "Restore." This is their present condition.

Chapter XLIII. Jehovah Speaks in Comfort to His People.

What Jehovah is and Will be to Israel. Verses 1-7.
Second Address to the Blind and Deaf People. Verses 8-13.
Jehovah Deals with Their Enemies. Verses 14-17.
Blessed Things to Come. They Shall Show Forth My Praise. Verses 18-21.
Jehovah's Loving Appeal and Promise to Remember Their Sins no More. Verses 22-28.

Chapters xliii-xlv must be studied together. Jehovah

speaks in these chapters as nowhere else in the prophetic Word. Note the many declarations Jehovah makes. "I have redeemed thee," "I will be with thee," "I have loved thee," "I have made Him," "I am the Lord," "I will make a way in the wilderness." All God's people can lay claim to these blessed words of promise and assurance. Ultimately Israel will possess and enjoy these great blessings.

Chapter XLIV. Jehovah Continues to Speak.

Spiritual Blessings Promised by the Gift of the Spirit. Verses 1-5.
Jehovah the First and the Last. Verses 6-8.
Idolatry Rebuked. Verses 9-20.
Remember! Return! Sing! Verses 21-23.
The Faithful Jehovah, the Redeemer. Verses 24-27.
Cyrus Named. Verse 28.

The outpouring of the Spirit upon Israel's seed promised in the beginning of the chapter has not yet taken place. Compare with chapter xxxii:15 and lix: 21. Verses 21-23 look forward to the coming age of blessing. Then Israel will be "Jehovah's servant" on the earth; then their transgressions will be blotted out. Then the heavens, the earth, the mountains and the trees will break forth in singing. In verse 28 Cyrus is mentioned by name. This great Persian King was then in the distant future an unborn being. Jehovah knew him and named him through Isaiah. He calls him "my shepherd" and predicts his work. Josephus declares that when Cyrus found his name in the Book of Isaiah, written 220 years before, an earnest desire laid hold upon him to fulfil what was written.

Chapter XLV. The Word of Jehovah to Cyrus, to Israel and to the Ends of the Earth.

Thus Saith Jehovah to Cyrus. Verses 1-13.
Thus Saith Jehovah: Israel Shall be Saved. Verses 14-17.
Thus Saith Jehovah to the Ends of the Earth: Every Knee to Bow. Verses 18-25.

Cyrus is called in this chapter God's anointed (Messiah). Jehovah called him by name, but it was for the sake of Israel. But it is well to bear in mind that Cyrus, God's instrument, called and prepared to make the restoration of a remnant possible, is likewise a type of Christ, through whom alone the promises of God to the nation can be accomplished.

Note the statements "Israel shall be saved in Jehovah with an everlasting salvation" (verse 17). "All the ends of the earth will be saved" (verse 22). Then idolatry will be rebuked (xliv:9-20). But notice the order. First Israel must know salvation and as a result the ends of the earth will look and be saved. The most precious Gospel truths found here are well known.

Chapter XLVI. Babylon is to Fall.

The Babylonian Idols Carried by Beasts. Verses 1-2.
How Jehovah Carries His People. Verses 3-4.
The Divine Reproach. Verses 5-7.
A Ravenous Bird (Cyrus) to Come from the East. Verses 8-11.
Salvation in Zion. Verses 12-13.

The opening verses are comforting. The helplessness of the Babylonian idols is described. They have to be carried. They cannot deliver out of captivity, for they themselves have gone into captivity. But Jehovah carries His people from birth to old age. The last verse takes us beyond the fall of the Babylon of the past. When the final Babylon described in Revelation is accomplished then it will be true "I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory."

Chapter XLVII. A Description of the Fall of Babylon.

Babylon's Degradation Announced. Verses 1-3.
Israel Acknowledges the Redeemer. Verse 4.
Retribution for Babylon. Verses 5-7.
The Destruction Swift and Sure. Verses 8-15.

In chapter xiv a similar description of Babylon and

the fall of the King of Babylon is recorded. All has its meaning for the future.

Chapter XLVIII. The Divine Restatement Concerning His People, Their Condition and Future.

Their Condition and Jehovah's Predictions. Verses 1-8.
Jehovah Acts for His Name's Sake. Verses 9-11.
"I am He." Verses 12-16.
Israel's Future Blessing. Verses 17-21.
No Peace for the Wicked. Verse 22.

This chapter touches once more upon the different phases of Jehovah's messages from chapters xl-xlvii. Israel's apostate condition, Jehovah's sovereign grace and mercy towards them, Cyrus (verses 14-15), the blessings of the future for a converted remnant of His people, are all mentioned again. Solemn is the declaration that whatever Jehovah does, whatever comfort and peace He bestows, however grand and glorious the blessings of the future are, the wicked are forever excluded. There is no peace unto the wicked.

This chapter closes the first section of the second part of Isaiah. Babylon, Cyrus and Jehovah's Majesty and Glory, revealed in predicting future things, the helplessness of idols and Jehovah's mercy and power manifested in the restoration and blessing of His people are the leading features of this section.

Section 2. Chapters XLIX-LVII.

The Servant of Jehovah, His Suffering and His Glory.

Israel Rejects the Redeemer. They are Dispersed Among the Gentiles. The Ends of the Earth Hear the Salvation of God.

Chapter XLIX. The Key and Introduction to this Section. The Servant of Jehovah and His Mission.

The Servant Speaks of Himself. Verses 1-3.
He Complains of Failure. Verse 4.

Jehovah's Answer to Him. Verses 5-13.
Zion Speaks. Verse 14.
Jehovah's Answer. Verses 15-26.

This entire chapter is the key to the whole section. The Servant of Jehovah, the Lord Jesus Christ, stands in the foreground. He is seen as the rejected One, who complains that He has labored in vain. The ultimate result of His Work is prophetically described. In the opening verses He speaks of His call. To bring Jacob to God is why He appeared in the midst of His own. But Israel is not gathered, for they rejected Him (verse 5). The nation abhorreth Him. Israel's gathering was not accomplished at the first advent. The nation was set aside. By their fall salvation came to the Gentiles. This is fully revealed in verses 6-7. In verses 8-13 we find the future work of Christ as King. When it is accomplished the heavens will sing and the earth will be joyful. Zion's present complaint (verse 14) is answered by promises of restoration.

Chapter L. The Servant Speaks of His Determination and Suffering.

Verses 1-3 Belong to the Preceding Chapter.
The Cause of Zion's Present Desolation. Verses 1-3.
The Servant's Self Witness. Verse 4.
His Obedience and His Suffering. Verses 5-6.
His Victorious Triumph. Verses 7-9.
The Two Classes: Those Who Fear Him and Those Who Reject Him. Verses 10-11.

The Suffering One is speaking. Little comment is needed on this chapter if the reader will use the above Key.

Chapter LI. Jehovah Encourages His Faithful People, the Remnant of Israel.

The Call to Remember Abraham. Verses 1-2.
Zion to be Comforted. Verse 3.

His Righteousness Near; His Arm to Judge the People. Verses 4-6.
Fear ye Not. Verses 7-8.
The Prayer of Faith. Verses 9-11.
Jehovah Answers. Verses 12-16.
The Suffering of the Nation to End. Verses 17-23.

The Lord speaks to His faithful people. He reminds them of Abraham and the covenant. He assures them that the wilderness of Zion shall become like Eden, like the garden of the Lord. Judgment shall overtake the earth. It is beautiful to see how the faithful pray in faith after this message from Jehovah (verses 9-11), and how Jehovah answers them (verses 12-16).

Chapter LII. Zion Awakening and the Coming of the Lord.

It is unfortunate that chapter lii:1-12 is detached from chapter li and that the last 3 verses of chapter lii are detached from the chapter which follows. The correct division is chapter li-lii-12; chapter lii:13-liii:12.
Zion Called to Awake. Verses 1-5.
"In That Day" Behold it is I. Verse 6.
The Results of the Return of Jehovah. Verses 7-12.
The Servant's Suffering and Glory. Verses 13-15.

The last paragraph of chapter li gives the divine declaration that the suffering and affliction of Israel is to end. "Behold I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again" (li:22). Now Zion assured of the end of suffering is called upon to awaken and put on beautiful garments. She is to arise from the dust. Such is the glorious future of Jerusalem. Verses 7-12 reveal the blessed results of the Coming of the Lord. Then it shall be said, "Thy God reigneth." Then and not before "all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God" (v. 10).

Verses 13-15 connect with chapter l. Chapter li-lii: 12 is parenthetical.

Chapter LIII. The Sinbearer and His Victory.

The Marred Visage and His Exaltation. lii:13-15.
His Life and His Rejection by the Nation. liii:1-3.
The Work of the Sinbearer; Smitten, Afflicted and Bruised. Verses 4-6.
His Submission and His Deliverance. Verses 7-9.
His Glorious Reward. Verses 10-12.

In "Messianic Predictions," at the close the reader will find hints on this great chapter. We do not repeat them here. The New Testament fully bears witness to this great vision of the Cross of Christ, the vicarious suffering of the Son of God and its blessed results. To reject them as meaning Christ and His work of atonement is equivalent to the rejection of the revelation of the New Testament and especially the rejection of the Person of our Lord. The chapter is one of the greatest in this book. After the 53d chapter the Servant of Jehovah is no longer mentioned. He is seen in the next section as the King coming with power and executing the judgments of God.

Chapter LIV. Israel Called to Sing.

The Blessings of Restoration. Verses 1-6.
Mercy Bestowed. Verses 7-10.
The Earthly Glory of Jerusalem. Verses 11-14.
Jehovah Keeps and Defends His People. Verses 15-17.

After the cross the singing. What singing there will be in the earth when at last "they will look upon Him, whom they have pierced." Israel will some day know the full meaning of Isaiah liii, and when He is owned at last the Glories and Blessings of Restoration will, through infinite Grace, be bestowed upon them. Enlargement and faithfulness will be the results. The shame of Israel's youth and long widowhood is ended. The forsaking is ended. Everlasting kindness will be their happy portion. The fear and sorrow of Israel are ended because "He hath poured out His soul unto death."

Chapter LV. Salvation's Offer and Provision.

The Invitation to Everyone and the Promise. Verses 1-2.
The Sure Mercies of David. Verses 3-5.
The Exhortation to Seek and to Forsake. Verses 6-7.
God's Thoughts and God's Ways. Verses 8-11.
The Joy, Peace and Glory of the Future. Verses 12-13.

The scope and application of this chapter must not be limited. While Israel eventually will break forth in singing as the result of believing on Him, whom they once despised, the invitation to a free and full salvation goes forth to every one. It is the great Gospel invitation in this Book. But the national promises to Israel are in evidence in verses 3-5. And when Israel is redeemed the invitation to salvation will go forth as never before. Now individuals are saved. Then nations will be brought into the kingdom. "Nations that knew not thee shall come unto thee because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for He Hath glorified thee."

Chapter LVI. Salvation Enjoyed by the Strangers and Eunuchs.

Strangers and Servants Joined unto the Lord to Serve Him and to Love the Name of the Lord. Verses 1-8.

The first eight verses of this chapter stand by themselves. Strangers to the Commonwealth of Israel and Eunuchs are gathered in. It is the result of the gracious invitation of the preceding chapter and that again is the result of the work of the Servant of Jehovah and His vicarious suffering. While these verses look forward to the Kingdom we have in them a hint of what God does now in gathering strangers. The gathering of the others in verse eight can only take place when the outcasts of Israel are brought in.

Chapter lvi:9-lvii:14, must be read continuously.

Chapter LVII. The Condition of the Apostate Nation. The Two Classes.

The Condition of the Shepherds of Israel. Lvi:9-12.
Dumb Dogs, Loving Slumber, Greedy Dogs, etc.
Apostate Israel. Lvii:1-14.
The Two Classes. Verses 15-21.

The final chapter of this second section corresponds to the last chapter of the first section (xlviii). The sad condition of the people Israel is pictured. This is their national apostasy throughout this age, while strangers are joined to the Lord and the church is gathered. The worst is yet to come. Lvii:9 looks forward to the great apostasy during the great tribulation. The King is the Antichrist, who takes his seat in the temple and claims worship (2 Thess. ii). They worship him, the masterpiece of Satan, and thus they debase themselves unto hell.

Gracious is the promise to the feeble remnant, those who are contrite and humble. "I have seen his ways and will heal him. I will lead him also and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners." Peace is promised to him that is afar off (Gentiles) and to him that is near (Israel). It will be fully realized in the Kingdom. "But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." It is the same solemn declaration which stands last in chapter xlviii. Comfort and peace for all, except for the wicked. It is a complete answer to the heresy of the present day, which claims that all Israel, including the wicked dead, will be saved and have a share in the Kingdom of Peace.

Section 3. Chapters LVIII-LXVI.

Jewish History in the Endtime: their Future Glory and the Glory of the Coming Age.

This third and last section of the vision of Isaiah can only be understood and appreciated if it is studied in the light of other prophecies which predict the final events with which the times of the Gentiles close. That period consists of 7 years, the last 3½ being the great tribulation. According to these predictions a part of the Jewish nation will be back in their land. These returned Jews will consist of two classes, a faithful remnant who own their condition, trust in Jehovah and in the national promises, and an unbelieving mass. The latter will be the large majority and hate their own brethren. In their unbelief they will build another temple and eventually will accept the false Messiah, the Anti-christ. The struggles and troubles of the endtime can easily be traced in this last section. The faithful remnant, their fears and hopes, their sufferings and prayers are written here, as well as their deliverance through the Coming of the King, the Lord Jesus Christ. The prophetic descriptions of the future of Jerusalem, the land of Israel, the restored nation, the spiritual blessings and the glories in store for this earth are the most magnificent in the entire book.

Chapter LVIII. Key and Introduction to this Section. The Condition of the People. Repentance and the Blessings to follow.

The Prophet's Commission. Verse 1.
The Transgression and Sins of Jacob Uncovered. Verses 2-5.
The Divine Requirements. Verses 6-7.
What Jehovah Promises. Verses 8-14.

Once more the Prophet is commissioned to cry and this time to call the people to repentance. Such will be the case during the time of the end. The first advent of the Lord was heralded by John the Baptist, who called the nation to repentance. The second advent will be preceded by another call to repentance. It is before us in this chapter. See also Malachi iv:5-6.

In verses 9-14 we have all the great future blessings of the converted remnant of Israel described. It is the entire section in embryo.

Chapter LIX. Apostasy and Confession. Jehovah's Intervention and the Coming of the Redeemer.

The Deplorable Condition of the People. Verses 1-8.
The Confession. Verses 9-15.
Jehovah's Intervention. Verses 16-19.
The Coming of the Redeemer. Verses 20-21.

The corruption of the people during the endtime is first described. But Grace is at work and a part of the people confess their sins. They confess that they are in darkness, that they are blind, that they stumble and are like dead men. They confess that salvation is far from them. They confess their lying, their departure from God and their revolt. It is their future repentance. Then Jehovah sees and intervenes. He answers the confession in Person. He comes to repay the adversaries. He comes in mighty judgment power. As a result they will fear His name. The Redeemer then comes to Zion and appears for the salvation of them that turn from transgression. Compare this with Rom. xi:25-20.

Chapter LX. The Glory Chapter. The Morning of a New Age and its Blessings.

The Light and Glory Has Come. Verse 1.
The Darkness Before the Morning. Verse 2.
The Conversion of the Gentiles. Verse 3.
The Dispersed Brought Home. Verse 4.
The Conversion of the World. Verses 5-9.
Jerusalem Restored and Glorified. Verses 10-16.
The Theocratic Kingdom Established; its Material and Spiritual Glories. Verses 17-21.

A small volume might be written on this Glory Chapter. The reader will note how all stands connected with chapter lviii and lix. First the call to repentance, then the uncovering of Jacob's transgression, their confession, the answer of Jehovah by His personal manifestation. He deals with His adversaries and appears as Redeemer in Zion. Then the Glory light breaks forth. It is the dawn of the morning. That

morning was preceded by gross darkness—universal apostasy and corruption. After the Glory has broken forth the Kingdom age begins. The conversion of the Gentiles will take place and Jerusalem will be indeed the city of a great King. Then at last all the people will be righteous. How strange that Christendom should ignore these majestic predictions and their divine order.

Chapter LXI. The King, Jehovah's Messenger. His People and their Salvation Song.

Jehovah's Messenger and His Work. Verses 1-5.
His People a Kingdom of Priests and Their Work. Verses 5-9.
The Salvation Song. Verse 10.
The Blessings of the Whole Earth. Verse 11.

Luke iv tells us that the Lord Jesus Christ applied the opening verses to Himself. The destructive criticism denies both the Isaiah authorship of this chapter and its messianic application. The satanic origin of this kind of criticism is here fully exposed. But our Lord did not quote the whole of verse 2. He only read up to "the acceptable year of the Lord." This sentence marks the work He did in His first advent. The day of vengeance is introduced by His second advent. The results of His second coming are described in the verses which follow. Then Israel will be the Kingdom of Priests and a holy nation (Exod. xix). They will sing the song of salvation (verse 10). Righteousness and praise will follow.

Chapter LXII. Zion's Glory.

He Will Not Rest. Verse 1.
The New Names. Verses 2-5.
The Intercession and the Answer. Verses 6-9.
The Accomplishment at Hand. Verses 10-12.

The intercession in the beginning of the chapter is that of Christ. He will not rest till He has accomplished His purpose in His earthly people and in Zion.

When it is accomplished Gentiles and Kings will witness it. Zion then shall be called by a new name. The forsaken one will not longer be forsaken; the desolation of the land will cease. She shall be called Hephzibah (My delight in her); the land will be Beulah (Married). All points to the glorious consummation of the Kingdom, and other watchmen intercede and give Him no rest till He establish and make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. Faithful Jews, men of prayer will during the great tribulation call on God to make good His Word and fulfil His promises. May God's people even now plead and intercede for the hastening of all His purposes. "Behold, thy salvation cometh, behold his reward is with Him and His work before Him." Note the results of His Coming in verse 12.

Chapter LXIII. The Executor of the Day of Vengeance.

The Glorious Appearing. Verse 1.
The Day of Vengeance. Verses 2-6.

Rev. xix:11-21 corresponds to this marvelous description of the coming King. Before in this section we read of the day of vengeance, the Lord's intervention in behalf of His people and the overthrow of their enemies. The Day of Vengeance is now beheld by the Prophet. The acceptable year is closed and judgment sweeps the earth. Often this chapter is quoted as meaning the salvation work of Christ. It has nothing to do with that. It is His judgment work. It is unfortunate that the lxiii chapter is not ended in our Bibles with the sixth verse. Verses 7-19 belong to chapter lxiv.

Chapter LXIII-7-19-LXIV. The Great Intercessory Prayer.

Jehovah's Loving Kindness and Power in the Past Remembered. Verses 7-14.
Their Deepest Need. Verse 15.
The Cry of Faith, Thou Art our Father. Verse 16.

The Increasing Plea. Verses 17-19.
The Prayer for Jehovah's Manifestation. Lxiv:1-4.
Confession and Humiliation. Verses 5-7.
The Cry for Mercy and Help. Verses 8-12.

This is one of the greatest prayers in the Bible. The Prophet no doubt prayed it first of all, and the Spirit of Christ through him. But its full meaning will be reached when the faithful remnant of Israel in the end-time cries for help and deliverance during the great tribulation. When Daniel discovered that the end of the Babylonian captivity was at hand, he uttered a great prayer (Daniel ix). The same beautiful spirit of a contrite heart, confession of sin, trust in Jehovah, pleading for Jerusalem and expectation of deliverance, which characterizes Daniel's prayer is seen in this great prayer. Many of the prayers in the Book of Psalms are the prayers of the remnant suffering in the land before the second advent.

The remaining two chapters contain the answer to this prayer.

Chapter LXV. Jehovah's Answer. The Rebellious and their Judgment. The Faithful and their Blessings.

The Divine Rebuke to the Apostates. Verses 1-8.
The Elect Seed. Verses 9-10.
The Judgment of the Apostates. Verses 11-12.
The Blessings of Jehovah's Servants and the Contrast. Verses 13-16.
The Glories and Blessings of the Future. Verses 17-25.

The first eight verses give a description of the iniquities practised by apostate Israel. Judgment will overtake them in the day of vengeance. Then the blessings of Jehovah's true servant (the remnant) are declared. They shall eat, drink, rejoice and be blessed. All is contrasted with the wicked who have forsaken the Lord. A marvelous revelation concerning the future is given in verses 17-25. When will all this be accomplished? It begins with the day of Jehovah; that day of the Lord is one thousand years. At the

close of it the new heavens and a new earth will be created. Then, when eternal ages begin the complete fulfilment is reached. But the blessings of the Millennium are also before us. Jerusalem is created a place of rejoicing and His people, the people of the Kingdom, Jews and Gentiles, obedient to the laws of the Kingdom, will enjoy the material blessings here predicted. And groaning creation is seen once more delivered.

Chapter LXVI. The Finale. The Two Classes. The Prophecy of Isaiah in a Retrospect.

The Apostates and Their Wicked Worship. Verses 1-4.
The Remnant Suffering and Encouraged. Verse 5.
The Sudden Manifestation of the Lord. Verse 6.
The Nation's Rebirth. Verse 7-9.
Jerusalem's Supremacy and Glory. Verses 10-14.
The Warning of Judgment. Verses 15-18.
The Regathering After Judgment. Verses 19-21.
The Blessings for the Righteous. Verses 22-23.
The Destiny of the Wicked. Verse 24.

This great chapter is the fitting conclusion of the Prophecy of Isaiah. The leading predictions contained in Isaiah concerning the future are once more restated. The opening verses have mystified many readers of this book. The apostate part of the Jewish nation, restored in unbelief (a restoration now going on), erect a temple once more and resume their ancient worship. This worship without faith in Jehovah is an abomination before Him. It were as if they offered swine's blood. Their coming judgment is announced in verse 4. The pious remnant, the praying remnant is seen once more. They tremble at the Word of the Lord. The unbelievers in their own nation hate them. They are mocked because they expect Jehovah's intervention from above. "Let the Lord be glorified"—they say in ridicule (verse 5). Then the coming of the Lord takes place. This is described in the sixth verse. The nation's rebirth, the supremacy and glory of Jerusalem, additional warnings, the gathering of the people

into the Kingdom, the blessedness of the righteous and the destiny of Jehovah's enemies conclude the chapter and the book.

The reader will have noticed that each section of the Second Part begins with a chapter which is the key and introduction to the section. Each concludes with a description of the two classes which compose the nation in the last days and emphasizes the fact that for the wicked there is no peace, but punishment. Each section reveals a Person. The first section Cyrus, under whom the remnant returned from Babylon; the second, the suffering Servant of Jehovah; the third, the King of Glory to execute vengeance and deliver His people. May He give us to see these wonderful things to come. May the vision of the future be the inspiration of our lives.

THREE STUDIES IN ISAIAH.

The Scope of Isaiah.

It is a great book which bears the name of Isaiah. The scope of the book and the contents are of indescribable grandeur. The more it is read, the more its majestic greatness takes hold of the heart and mind of the reader. The revelations and predictions it contains are the foundations of our faith. They unfold the future of Israel, describe the glories of the kingdom to come and the blessings in store for this earth. Isaiah is the Prophet of the future. The supernatural origin of the writings of this noble Prophet is in evidence throughout the entire book.

The Work of the Critics. Perhaps no other book has been of late years so much attacked by the destructive critics as the book of Isaiah. This in itself is an evidence of its genuineness and inspiration. Satan through his instruments attacks especially those parts of God's Word where the Holy Spirit has revealed the Person of our Lord, His work and His coming Kingdom. It is the first move towards the rejection of the Person of Christ. In reading some of the critical works on Isaiah one is reminded of a dissecting room. These critics follow the tactics of the Jewish King Jehoiakim. He took the penknife and cut the scroll upon which God's message through Jeremiah was written. I wonder if archaeologists will some day find that penknife. If so it ought to be presented as a precious relic to the school of the destructive critics who might build a shrine for it in some of their institutions.

It would be interesting to follow the history of this criticism. We fear, however it would not be very edifying to us who are believers in the inspiration of this book. What the critics have especially attacked is the authorship. They tell us that the book of Isaiah is of a composite origin. Isaiah did not write the entire book which bears his name. For about 2500 years no one ever thought of even suggesting that Isaiah did not write the book. Then they invented an unknown person who is called the Deutero-Isaiah, i. e., a second Isaiah, who is said to have written the sublime chapters 40-66. With this they did not stop. They

found out that this Deutero-Isaiah only wrote chapters 40-55 and a Trito-Isaiah wrote the greater part of chapters 55-66. With their supposed learning they discovered that some of these chapters were written in Babylon and others in Palestine. Some of the most radical critics have even gone beyond this.

To give the result of the work of the critics, men like George Adams Smith, Canon Driver and A. B. Davidson, declare that out of the 66 chapters, which compose the book of Isaiah forty-four were not written by Isaiah. Others cut out more than that so that actually they claim out of the 1292 verses found in the book of Isaiah only 260 were penned by the Prophet.

But what does all this mean? It is a denial of what is written in the first verse of this book. "The vision of Isaiah, the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah." And if several men wrote this book, if part was written during the Babylonian captivity and other parts added after the captivity, then this statement with which the book begins is untrue. This first verse assures us that the book is a whole, that all we find in it is the vision of one man. To deny this breaks down the truthfulness of the book and reduces it to the level of common literature. This is what the critics have done. But the book of Isaiah is quoted in the New Testament. The Jews always believed this book to have been written by Isaiah. They held this belief when our Lord was on the earth. He Himself read in the synagogue of Nazareth from chapter 61, which the critics deny to be the writing of Isaiah. Quotations from Isaiah are frequently found in different parts of the New Testament. Twenty-one times we read of Isaiah and his words in the New Testament. The phrases used are the following: "Spoken by the Prophet Esaias"; "Fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias"; "Well did Esaias Prophesy"; "In the Book of the Words of Esaias"; "As said the Prophet Esaias"; "The saying of Esaias the Prophet"; "These things said Esaias"; "Well spake the Holy Spirit by Esaias"; "Esaias also saith"; "Esaias saith." This is evidence enough that the Lord and the Holy Spirit through the Evangelists and the Apostle Paul set their seal to this uncontradicted and unanimous belief that Isaiah wrote this book. The critics by their methods impeach the testimony of the Lord Himself or charge the infallible Lord of Glory to have been limited in His knowledge and that He acquiesced in the current traditional belief of the Jewish people, knowing better Himself.

All the arguments of the critics are disproven by the book itself. One only needs to study this book and the careful study

will bring out the unanswerable fact of the unity of the Book of Isaiah. Only one person could have written such a book and that person did not write it by himself, but was the mouthpiece of Jehovah. This is the conclusion of an intelligent and spiritual study of the book itself. The silly and arbitrary restrictions the critics make, that Isaiah could not have written certain passages, because it was beyond his horizon, or that he could not have mentioned Cyrus, the Persian king, by name, over 150 years before he was born, springs from the subtle infidelity which is at the bottom of the destructive criticism, which denies the supernatural altogether.

The Scope of Isaiah. Turning to the book we find that there are two great parts:

1. **Chapters I-XXXV. The earlier Prophecies.**

   Chapters XXXVI-XXXIX. Historical Parenthesis.

2. **Chapters XL-LXVI. The later Prophecies.**

In the first part we find that Isaiah witnessed against the moral and religious conditions of the people. Judgments are announced upon Jerusalem, Judah and upon the nations. Judgments to come are the leading features in the first 35 chapters. The blessings of the future after the execution of these judgments are also revealed, but they take a secondary place. We see in the first part the gathering of the stormclouds, we hear the rolling thunders of divine judgment, and in the distance the calm and sunshine after the storm. The second part is introduced with the words of comfort, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people." While we read also of judgments in this part the great revelation of the later prophecies of Isaiah is the restoration which is in store for Jerusalem and the great blessings which the nations and the earth will receive when Jerusalem has been restored and her people redeemed.

In the first part the Assyrian is announced to come against Jerusalem. The Assyrian invasion stands in the foreground. This Assyrian enemy however is the prophetic type of another external foe, who appears in the endtime. Then the deliverance of Jerusalem is announced and the Assyrian completely overthrown. In the second part the Assyrian enemy is no longer mentioned. From this we conclude that these chapters were written after the Assyrian period. Israel's restoration from Babylon and from the greater dispersion which has lasted so long is predicted in the second part. The wonderful results of

this restoration are here revealed. These two parts are therefore inseparable. The Isaiah who wrote of judgments is the Isaiah who makes known the blessings. The entire book gives the history of Israel, past, present and future. Both parts reveal Him who is the Holy One of Israel, the Redeemer. His incarnation, His obedience as God's servant, His rejection, His suffering and death, His second coming and Kingdom rule are progressively revealed from Chapters i-lxvi.

The Division of the First Part. If we omit Chapters xxxvi-xxxix, which are historical, we find that the main divisions of the first part are three.

First Division, Chapters I-XII. In this division we find first Israel's sin and apostacy; their hardening; God's judgment upon them. This is followed by a vision concerning the future, ii:1-5. Six woes are pronounced in Chapter V upon the apostate nation. We find the birth of the Redeemer announced. His Person, His work and His future glory are indicated. The Assyrian is mentioned for the first time; his pride and overthrow are pictured. The section closes with a vision of the future. The second coming of Christ, the restoration of the people Israel and what will come in blessing to the Gentiles and to creation is predicted. It closes with a beautiful song of praise, which redeemed Israel will sing in that day. Attention has often been called to the fact that the opening verses and chapters of a book give the key for the whole book. The first twelve chapters of Isaiah contain the whole book of Isaiah in embryo.

Second Division, Chapters XIII-XXVII. Here we find first the judgments upon different nations announced. Babylon's judgment stands in the foreground. When that final judgment falls upon Babylon and its king, Israel will find mercy and in a triumphant utterance celebrate the fall of the King of Babylon. All this has a meaning for the future. Then judgments are announced against other nations. Palestina, Moab, Damascus, Ethiopia, Egypt, Elam, Arabia and Tyre are mentioned. Eleven chapters, xiii-xxiii, are taken up with those judgments, which were only partially fulfilled in the past.

With the twenty-fourth chapter the subject of judgment is continued. Chapters xxiv-xxvii contain a great prophecy. The judgment announced is the coming judgment for this world when the Lord Jesus Christ appears the second time. All classes are affected by it and the high ones that are on high (Satan and his angels) and the kings on earth are involved in it. This portion ends with several songs of praise. The remnant of

Israel praises Jehovah for deliverance and for His mercy to Jerusalem. Then there is a prophecy concerning the blessings of the future, when the Lord in connection with the blessing bestowed upon Israel will make a feast of fat things for all people. The last verse of this section announces once more the regathering of His scattered people to bring them back to Jerusalem. The great trumpet mentioned in xxvii:13 is the same of which the Lord speaks in Matthew xxiv:31, only our Lord tells us in addition that the angels will be used in this service.

Third Division, Chapters XXVIII-XXXV. In this section we find first six woes. The first section also contained six woes. The first woe is against Ephraim. Then follows the woe against Ariel (Jerusalem) that distress is to come upon this city. Blessing is promised after this visitation. Then there is a third woe against those who seek to hide their counsel from the Lord and their works are in the dark. The fourth woe is upon those who enter into an unholy alliance with Egypt, seek help there instead of the Lord. The fifth woe is directed against those who trust in the arm of flesh, in horses and chariots. The sixth woe is against the Assyrian destroyer. But alongside of these woes we find the promises of blessing to Israel in the future. A king is to reign in righteousness. The work of righteousness is to be peace. Jerusalem and Israel's land is to be desolate till the Spirit be poured out from on high, then the wilderness shall be a fruitful field (xxxii:13-20). The 34th chapter is a great prophecy of the future day of the Lord when His indignation will be upon all nations and when His fury will be poured out upon all their armies. It is the day of the Lord's vengeance and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion (verse 8). The last chapter in this section, chapter xxxv, shows again the future blessings for Israel and for the earth and the return of His people to Zion. And they come with singing. "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

We call attention to the fact that these three great sections follow the same course and end in the same way. The ending of each section reveals the restoration of Israel, the singing of the redeemed people and the blessing which will result from a restored and blest Israel for the nations and for the earth.

In dividing the earlier prophecies of Isaiah into three sections we have not considered Chapters xxxvi-xxxix. These chapters are of a historical character. Hezekiah's experience with

the Assyrian invasion, Hezekiah's prayer, the Prophet's message to the King, the destruction of the Assyrian army, the King's sickness and recovery and his fall into pride, are the contents of these four chapters. They may be looked upon as an appendix to the first part of Isaiah's vision and the preface to the second part. The Assyrian and his destruction is the culmination of the first part; the prediction of Isaiah concerning the Babylonian captivity (Chapter xxxix:6-7) opens the way for the later prophecies.

The Division of the Second Part. In these later prophecies we find likewise three great sections. However the character of the predictions found in the second part differs much from the earlier prophecies. The historical settings so prominent in the first part are entirely absent in the second. We briefly hint at the structure and contents of these three divisions.

The First Division, Chapters XL-XLVIII. This section begins with the message of comfort to Jerusalem. The first two verses of the fortieth chapter are the keynotes of the great symphony of Israel's future blessing and glory, which gradually breaks forth in this part, swelling higher and higher. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem (literally: to the heart of Jerusalem) and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." Throughout these later prophecies we find the comfort in store for His people, that their wanderings will end in restoration, their enemies will be conquered and their sins pardoned. Should it surprise anyone that the language employed in these great messages differs very much from the language of the first and earlier prophecies?

We find in this opening section a great deal of the majesty and glory of the God of Israel. A contrast is made between Israel's God and the idols of the nations. The one great proof brought forward is that the God of Israel has the power to predict future events. Read Chapter xli:21-25. All this is spoken to encourage the faithful remnant of Israel to trust in Jehovah. In view of the Babylonian captivity, which Isaiah had announced this is of special meaning. Again and again Jehovah speaks in these chapters of Himself and His power to forgive, to save and to deliver. "I am He—the first and the last—I even I am the Lord; and besides me there is no saviour—I am the Lord your Holy One, the creator of Israel your king—there is no God beside me—a just God and a Saviour"; these are a few of the direct utterances of Jehovah through Isaiah in

this section. Jehovah has the power to save and to deliver His people.

Here we read of "the servant of Jehovah." It has a twofold meaning. The redeemed remnant of Israel is spoken of as the servant of the Lord. This is what Israel will be in the future. But this title as used in the opening verses of Chapter xlii refers to Christ.

The people of Israel are prophetically seen in this section in Babylon but about to be delivered from Babylon. The great deliverer Cyrus, whom God called, is named in this portion of the book. The Lord who speaks of His power to tell the future things manifests this power in naming an unborn being and telling beforehand what his work was to be. Cyrus and his mission are recorded over 150 years before this Persian king was born and the record is found in Chapter xliv:24—xlv:25. Cyrus is called "the Anointed"—"my shepherd"—"whose right hand Jehovah upholdeth"—"who performs all Jehovah's pleasure." He is likewise called "a ravenous bird from the east" (xlvi:11). The return from Babylon is predicted to take place through the instrumentality of this king. But a greater restoration through a greater anointed One, the Redeemer of Israel, is promised in these chapters. The end of the section looks forward to that great coming restoration. The last verse declares "there is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked."

The Second Division, Chapters XLIX-LVII. This section brings the servant of Jehovah prominently before us. It is no longer the redeemed Israel, nor Cyrus, but the Lord Jesus Christ comes fully into view. The opening verses of Chapter xlix with which this division begins are again the keynote to the entire section. The Servant of the Lord is here called Israel, for He is the true Israel. In Him God is glorified. He Himself breaks out in the mournful complaint. "I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for naught." He is called to bring Jacob to God, yet Israel is not gathered. But the Gentiles hear of Him, whom Israel refuses. "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." All is indicated in these verses what the Servant of the Lord would do. His people, the nation, would despise Him and Israel would not be regathered at once but the Gentiles were to hear of Him. In chapter 1:4-11 we read again of Him. Here His suffering is mentioned more fully. "I gave my back to the smiters and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting" (1:6). The last time this Servant, the Christ, is mentioned by Isaiah is in Chapter liii.

Here we find the marvellous portrait of Him who suffered, died as the sinbearer and of His exaltation. After the sublime Fifty-third Chapter the Servant of the Lord is not mentioned again.

This section also speaks of what is in store for Israel when at last they believe in Him whom they once despised. The most glorious promises follow the Fifty-third Chapter. The Fifty-fourth Chapter has never yet seen its fulfilment and can only be fulfilled when the remnant of Israel bows before the One, whom they once despised. These chapters of this section look forward to their future blessing. The last verse of the second division is the same as the last verse of the first division, "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

The Third Division, Chapters LVIII-LXVI. This is the great Finale of Isaiah's symphony of Israel's coming restoration and redemption. It is the most majestic and sublime portion of the book. Here the remnant of Israel takes a more leading part. While in the previous chapters of these prophecies we hear promises of restoration in this concluding division we see a small and feeble remnant actually back in the land. It has nothing to do with the small remnant which returned from Babylon. It is a remnant of believing Jews brought back to the land and suffering in the midst of the great tribulation which precedes the glorious manifestation of the Lord and the literal fulfilment of the promises of blessing for Jerusalem. We have a record of their soul exercise, their troubles and their prayers in Chapter lxiii:7—lxiv:12. In Chapter lxiv:1 they pray for the coming of the Lord. And that coming in great power and glory is described in this division. The Redeemer comes to Zion and He comes bringing the day of vengeance for all His enemies (Chapter lix:20; lxiii:1-6). But who is able to expound the glorious things which are spoken of Jerusalem and the future of His redeemed people? Beginning with the Sixtieth Chapter we find an almost unbroken prediction of what is to be in the day when the Redeemer comes to Zion, what it will mean for His earthly people, for Jerusalem, for the nations and for all creation. This section is closely linked with certain predictions in the earlier prophecies; in fact, these closing chapters are expansions of the former vision of Isaiah as found in Chapters ii:1-5; xi-xii, and others. The last chapter is a resume of the great events predicted before. Here once more we read of the sudden manifestation of the Lord from heaven, the deliverance of the remnant of His people, the peace like a river for Jerusalem, the bringing back of the scattered sheep of Israel, the fiery judgments of the Lord and the conversion of the Gentiles. The last verse reveals the judgment upon the wicked. Their worm

shall not die; their fire shall not be quenched. This fully corresponds with the ending of the two previous divisions, when the Lord saith, "there is no peace for the wicked."

The same order of revelation prevails in the second part of Isaiah as in the first. We have seen how every division in the first part closed with predictions of blessing for Israel, their restoration and the glory of Jerusalem as well as the blessings which the whole earth will receive when that has come to pass. The same revelation is contained on a larger scale in the second part. The same order of events is maintained. And how solemn it is that each division of the later prophecies of Isaiah in the second part of his book closes with the declaration of the punishment, yea, the eternal punishment of the wicked. There is no peace for the wicked. Their worm dies not; their fire is not quenched. Evil teachers claim there is a restitution of all things including the wicked dead. Isaiah in his vision makes known what that promised restitution of all things is. The restoration of Israel; the restoration of Israel's land; the restoration of Jerusalem; peace for this earth; deliverance for groaning creation—all these he reveals. But solemnly God has said, "There is no peace for the wicked."

The great unity of the book of Isaiah proves that he wrote the entire book. The arrangement and contents tell us that it is not the work of man, but of the Spirit of God.

Messianic Predictions in Isaiah.

It would be of much interest and profit if we could take up each division of this great prophetic book and study some of its revelations. This we cannot do. But we shall point out two great topics which are progressively revealed in the vision of Isaiah. We shall study first the messianic unfoldings in this book, and then the great coming events, such as Israel's future blessings in the earth and the blessings of the Kingdom to come.

Of all the Prophets Isaiah saw the most about Christ. Only the Book of Psalms contains a larger number of messianic predictions. Every glory of our Lord and every phase of His life on earth was beheld by this great man of God. His incarnation, His growing up in Nazareth, His public ministry, His message to the people, His rejection by the nation, His sufferings, the shame and the cross, His death with its meaning, His resurrection, His ascension, His glorious exaltation and future mani-

festation as well as His work as Prophet, Priest and King, are all found in this book. We shall point out some of these great predictions and the connection in which we find them.

The Redeemer promised is Jehovah Himself. That the Messiah is Jehovah Himself, who appears on earth in the midst of His people, God manifested in the flesh, is seen in this entire book. The call of Isaiah to the prophetic office was in a great vision in which he saw Jehovah and His glory (Chapter vi). Whom he beheld is explained in the Gospel of John, the Gospel which tells us so fully of the essential Deity of the Lord Jesus. "These things said Esaias when he saw His glory and spake of Him" (John xii:41). He who was on the earth and whom His own received not is the One whose glory Isaiah saw in the Temple vision.

He is called throughout Isaiah "the Holy One of Israel." Twenty-five times this title of the Lord, who deals in judgment and in mercy with His people, is found in Isaiah. Read v:4; v:19-24; x:20; xii:6; xvii:7; xxix:19; xxx:11, 12, 15; xxxi:1; xxxvii:23; xli:14, 16, 20; xliii:3, 14; xlv:11; xlvii:4; xlviii:17; xlix:7; liv:5; lv:5; lx:9, 14. This phrase is found in only six other passages in the Old Testament. The Holy One of Israel is Jehovah; He is the Redeemer of His people. "Our Redeemer, Jehovah of hosts is his name, the Holy One of Israel" (xlvii:4), "Thus saith Jehovah, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel" (xlviii:17). This Holy One is the Creator. "The Holy One hath created it" (xli:20). He hath stretched the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth (li:13). He appeared as the Holy One in their midst and they knew Him not but despised Him. In chapter l:2-9 He is beheld as the One who clothes the heavens and who gives His back to the smiters. In chapter xlix:7 the Redeemer, Jehovah, the Holy One, is seen as despised and abhorred by the nation. At his Second Coming Isaiah predicts Israel shall discover that the rejected and despised One is Jehovah. "Therefore my people shall know my Name, therefore they shall know that I am He" (lii:6). The words "I am He" (Ani Hu) is a Divine Name and our Lord used it when he said to the woman at the well "I am" and to the company in the garden Gethsemane.

In chapter vii and viii His name is revealed as "Immanuel," God with us. Throughout Isaiah's vision the Redeemer, the Anointed One who is rejected by the nation, who suffers and dies, who comes again to dwell in the midst of His people, is Jehovah.

His Incarnation. The first messianic prediction in Isaiah relates to the incarnation of the Son of God. We find it in chapter vii:14. As it is well known its messianic character is denied by Jews and by the higher critics. The virgin birth is clearly predicted in these familiar words by Isaiah and the Holy Spirit in the first chapter of the New Testament tells us of the fulfilment of the words spoken by the Lord through Isaiah. In the first chapter of Luke the full announcement of the birth of Immanuel by the virgin is made by Gabriel to Mary. The rejection of this first great prophecy of the incarnation means the rejection of the incarnation itself.

Such alas! has been the case. We do not attempt to enter into the objections which are made against Isaiah vii:14. Not one of them has any foundation. The authority of the New Testament is sufficient to any believer.

The historic setting, however, is interesting and solves the problem why Isaiah received just this message at that time. Ahaz was threatened by King Pekah of Israel and by Rezin of Damascus, because he refused to make common cause with them against Assyria. He preferred the friendship of Assyria. When it became known that these two kings were planning an attack upon Jerusalem, Ahaz and the whole city were terror stricken. He decided at once to send to Assyria for help. How he sent messengers with valuable gifts to Tiglath-Pileser and called himself his servant and his son, is written in 2 Kings xvi:7-8.

Isaiah was then told by God to meet Ahaz at the waterworks of Jerusalem and to take his son Shear-Jashub along. The meaning of this name is "the remnant shall return." In his interview with the King the Prophet exhorts him to be true to Jehovah and that the house of David has nothing to fear. If he accepted the divinely given message he would be quiet and delivered of his fear and faint-heartedness. Then God offers Ahaz a sign, either in the depth or in the heights above. But the unbelieving King refused the offer. His wicked heart dreaded the consequences of such a sign. He did not want to be near to God and get a sign that God was near to him. He felt that in such a case he would have to abandon what God condemns and give up the alliance with the Assyrian. Then God gives the sign. It is the sign of the birth of the Messiah. The Deliverer is first announced in the Bible as being the seed of the woman; then as coming of the seed of Abraham from Isaac and Jacob; then of Judah and finally that He should be of the house of David. Here the prediction is narrowed down to the fact that He should be born of a virgin, necessarily of the

house of David. Ahaz the King of Judah feared for Jerusalem and the royal line. He had no cause to fear for God promised David a son to come from his loins, He whom King David addressed as his Lord, the root and offspring of David. The house of David was perfectly secure. Thus the unbelief of Ahaz was made the occasion for this great prediction. Christ to be born of the virgin and yet "God manifested in the flesh."

In chapter ix:6 the incarnation is announced once more and in the prophetic vision it is seen as already accomplished, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." The child is the Son of the virgin and He is God's unspeakable gift, the Son. As Man born of the woman He will have the government upon His shoulder and possess the throne of David. This looks forward to His Second Coming. The Son given is the Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. His Humanity and Deity are here blended together.

His Life and Ministry on Earth. The leading features of this blessed life and service on earth are revealed in Isaiah. We call attention to a few of the more prominent predictions.

His lowliness. He who was rich became poor for our sake. This poverty seems to be indicated in Isaiah vii:15, "butter and honey shall he eat." His lowliness is more fully predicted in liii:2, "For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of the dry ground; He hath no form and comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him."

The Servant of the Lord. As such He is filled with the Spirit. "And the Spirit of the Lord is upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord" (xi:2). "Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon Him" (xlii:1). His method is seen; He is unostentatious in His service. "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street" (xlii:2-3). His loving tenderness. "A bruised seed shall He not break and the smoking flax shall He not quench; He shall bring forth judgment unto truth" (xlii:4). These words are applied to Him in the New Testament (Matthew xii:18-20). His obedience we find predicted in chapter 1:5: "The Lord hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. His message is given likewise. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach

good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (lxi:1-2). It is a well known fact that our Lord read these words in the synagogue of Nazareth and pronounced them fulfilled. He also gives us a very important hint in reading this prediction. He stopped short in reading this passage. The rest belongs to His Second Coming. The First and Second Coming of Christ are repeatedly blended together.

As servant of the Lord He brings light. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death upon them hath the light shined" (Matthew iv:15-16).

His miracles are also touched upon. In chapter xxxv we read: "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing." When He appeared in the midst of His people He did these miracles to prove to the nation that He had the power of the Kingdom in His hands; however Isaiah xxxv looks forward to the Kingdom, which is yet to come.

His rejection by the people Israel. This rejection was predicted by Isaiah. As already quoted in chapter xlix:7, He is seen as despised and abhorred by the nation, so that He mournfully complains, "I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nought." On account of this rejection "Israel is not gathered" (verse 5). More fully is this rejection of the Servant of the Lord seen in the great liii chapter. "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised and we esteemed Him not."

His Mission to the Gentiles. While Israel is predicted to reject this servant, the Gentiles are to see His light and rejoice in His salvation. It is true most of these predictions await His future work, when He comes again and the Gentiles will be given to Him for an inheritance, but they also imply what is now in force. "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand and keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles" (xlii:6-7). "It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the desolations of Israel that thou mayest be my salvation to the end of the earth"

(xlix:6). Through Him Gentiles are saved now and when He comes again even the ends of the earth will know Him and He will reign over the Gentiles. Unto Him every knee must bow and every tongue shall swear (xlv:23).

The Sufferings of Christ. It was given to Isaiah to behold 700 years before the Son of God appeared on earth an almost complete picture of the sufferings of Christ and their vicarious character. How the obedient servant was to be treated by men is for the first time mentioned in chapter 1:7: "I gave my back to the smiters and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, I hid not my face from shame and spitting." But the great revelation of the sufferings of Christ is found in the famous fifty-third chapter. It is the culmination of the second part of Isaiah. The center of the chapter is "brought as a Lamb to the slaughter." The most ancient as well as reliable Jewish expositors apply the chapter to Messiah. The great expositors of the church in the past have all read the story of the Cross of Christ in this chapter. The New Testament repeatedly quotes Isaiah liii and knows no other fulfilment than in Him, who was the man of sorrows.

The Spirit-filled Evangelist Philip heard the Eunuch reading from this chapter and then opened his mouth and preached Jesus unto him. The infidel Jews have invented a theory which teaches that the nation's sufferings are described and not the Messiah's. This wicked denial the destructive critics have fully indorsed.

The last three verses of chapter lii belong to the liii chapter. If we count them to the great chapter we find five progressive parts: 1. The Servant—His suffering and His exaltation, so that nations are astonished at him and Kings shut their mouths. It is the keynote of the prediction that follows (lii:13-15). 2. His life and His rejection by the nation (lii:1-3). 3. His sufferings; smitten, afflicted, wounded and bruised (verses 4-6). 4. His submission and His deliverance (verses 7-9). 5. His glorious Reward (verses 10-12).

But what is all contained in this matchless chapter! We have in it a description of the Servant, the vicarious sufferer, the triumphant victor as nowhere else. Twelve great statements are made concerning His work on the Cross: 1. He hath borne our griefs. 2. Carried our sorrows. 3. He was wounded for our transgressions. 4. Bruised for our iniquities. 5. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him. 6. With His stripes we are healed. 7. The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. 8. For the transgression of my people was He smitten. 9. Made

His soul an offering for sin. 10. He shall bear their iniquities. 11. He bears the sin of many. 12. Made intercession for the transgressors.

His holy, spotless character is revealed. As a lamb He suffered in patience. He had done no violence nor was deceit in His mouth. He suffered and died for others. He suffered for His people (John xi:50-51). It was God who smote Him, the Lord who bruised Him, who put Him to grief. There is in the whole Bible no grander unfolding of John iii:16 than this great chapter. Whoever rejects Isaiah's vision of the Sinbearer, rejects the Gospel and denies the atoning work of the cross.

We also behold His Grave, we see Him risen in this chapter, exalted, interceding, justifying many, having a seed, an offspring as the last Adam, securing the travail of His soul and dividing the spoil with the great. Ah! who can tell out the majestic grandeur of this great peak in God's revelation! After this great vision, the Servant of the Lord is not mentioned again, nor His sufferings. The Glory side comes more fully in view in chapters 54-66. And it will be fully realized when Israel has confessed Him, whom they once rejected.

The Predictions of Glory. The Second Coming of Christ. More numerous and richer are the messianic predictions, which reveal His exaltation and the fact of His glorious Second coming.

Isaiah beheld His personal, visible and glorious coming, not as the sufferer but as the King. He saw Him coming in majesty and Glory. His Glory is seen in these visions as covering Jerusalem and the land and eventually the whole earth. He comes to Zion to redeem His people and deliver them out of the hands of their enemies. He comes to overthrow the wicked one and to execute the judgments of God on the earth. He comes to establish peace and dwell in the midst of His people and rule as King over the nations. We can call attention to a very few of the many predictions from different chapters; our remaining study will bring this great theme more fully to our view.

"He shall judge among the nations and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruninghooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (ii:4). This is the program of God. Peace on earth will thus be accomplished. It follows His visible manifestation. He appears in the Glory of His majesty and will alone be exalted in that day (ii:10, 11). His Glory will cover Jerusalem (iv:5). "With Righteousness shall He judge the poor and reprove with equity for

the meek in the earth; and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked" (xi:4). "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (verse 9). "Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion; for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee" (xii:6). "I will punish the world for their evil and the wicked for their iniquity" (xiii:11). "Therefore I will shake the heavens and the earth shall remove out of her place in the wrath of the Lord of Hosts, and in the day of His fierce anger" (xiii:13). "The Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem and before his ancients gloriously" (xxiv:23). "And it shall be said in that day, Lo this is our God, we have waited for Him and He will save us; this is the Lord we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation" (xxv:9). "The Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of earth for their iniquity" (xxvi:21). "Behold a King shall reign in righteousness" (xxxii:1). "And the Glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together" (xl:5). "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord" (lix:20). "Arise, shine for thy light is come and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee" (lx:1).

"Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the wine-press alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me. And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth" (lxiii:1-6).

"For behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire, and by his sword, will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many. For I know their works and their thoughts; it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory. And I will set a sign among them, and I will

send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles" (lxvi:15-16; 18-19).

These are a few of Isaiah's predictions concerning the future Glory of our Lord and the work of judgment and mercy He will execute. May it be our delight to meditate on these great prophetic unfoldings of the Person and the glorious work of our Lord, till some day we shall be face to face with Himself and through Grace become partakers of His Glory.

Future Glories and Blessings.

The Book of Isaiah abounds in great predictions of Glories and Blessings in store for this earth and its inhabitants. Not one of these have been fulfilled in the past, nor are they now in process of fulfilment. They must therefore be fulfilled in the future. To this we might add that not one of these great predictions can be fulfilled till the predicted judgments have taken place.

Isaiah uses some 45 times the phrase "in that day." He uses these words almost exclusively in the earlier prophecies contained in chapters i-xxxv. This day is the day when Jehovah is manifested and when He deals in judgment with the earth. We give a few of the more prominent passages in which that day is mentioned (Chapter ii:10-22). Here the day is described as bringing the exaltation of the Lord and the utter casting down of all that is lofty and high (Chapter xiii:9-13). These words tell us that it is the day in which the world will be punished for its wickedness and that heaven and earth will be shaken (Chapter xxiv). In this great judgment chapter we read that all classes will be affected by it, the earth will reel to and fro like a drunkard and be removed like a cottage. Then the Kings on earth will be punished. The high ones on high, the wicked spirits in the heavenlies, will be shut up in prison. This great day Isaiah beheld is the day "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." Such a day has not yet been. It will surely come. Never before have things been so ripe for that day as they are now.

Whatever we find in future Glories and Blessings in Isaiah is always in connection with that day. The Glories and Blessings

do not precede that day, but the day precedes the Glories and Blessings promised. Therefore we say the fulfilment of these great predictions has not been in the past, they are not now being fulfilled and they cannot be fulfilled till the storm clouds of Divine judgment have swept over this earth and the Lord has been manifested.

The great majority of Christians hold the unscriptural view that in the church and through the church the visions of Isaiah are fulfilled in a spiritual way. But they forget the great day in Isaiah and the fact stated that the Glories and Blessings predicted follow that day.

What then are these predicted Glories and Blessings? We find that the larger number of them belong to the people Israel. We look at these first.

The Future Blessings of Israel. This wonderful people has a wonderful future. God has not cast them away and to them still belong the promises and the Glory. Israel is set aside throughout this present age and judicially blinded. Isaiah had to announce this fact. We find that in the vision which called him into the prophetic office the message was given to him that the nation should not hear and that their eyes should be blinded. The consummation of this predicted blindness came after they had rejected Christ. We find these words of Isaiah (vi:10) quoted three times in the New Testament. In Matthew xxiii:13-15. Israel had then rejected Him and He began to teach the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven in parables. In John xii:40 when the Lord was about to suffer and to die. In Acts xxviii:27 at the close of the Book of Acts after the Gospel had been preached to them by the Holy Spirit come down from heaven. They rejected it and the last statement of the Apostle of the Gentiles, who loved his people so well, is a significant one, "the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles and they will hear it." Since then the message Isaiah received has been fully carried out. They are judicially blinded and scattered among the nations. Their land is desolate. Their city is trodden down by the Gentiles. Their sufferings and woes have been indescribable. God has hidden His face from them and in His wrath He has forsaken them.

But Isaiah's vision tells us likewise that this condition is not to be permanent. The curse will be changed into blessing and they will receive double for all their sin.

Their Restoration to the Land. They will be brought back to the land. In chapter xi:10-12 we find one of these unfulfilled predictions of Israel's restoration. It has been taught that these

words were fulfilled in the return of the remnant from Babylon. Notice, however, that it saith "and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth." It speaks of a gathering from a world-wide dispersion, not from the Babylonian captivity. It includes the islands of the sea and it is distinctly stated that the Lord shall set His hand again the *second* time to recover the remnant of His people. The entire chapter shows that it is a future thing.

In Chapter xiv:1-2 is another unfulfilled prediction. "For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land." The nations are mentioned as helping them to return. This fact is indicated elsewhere in Isaiah (Chapters xviii:2, lxvi:20). This regathering is stated in xxvii:13. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount of Jerusalem." Also read xxxv:10; xliii:5-6; xlix:10-12. All the great predictions in the later prophecies concerning Israel's glorious state in the land make such a regathering necessary.

The Spiritual Blessings. The calling of Israel as a nation is stated in Exodus xix:5-6. "Now therefore if ye will obey my voice, indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me, above all people, for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." Up to now this has never been; yet God's gifts and calling are without repentance. The day is coming when the Lord in His infinite Grace will bestow upon the remnant of His people such spiritual blessings, that they will be healed of all their backslidings and become a holy nation and a kingdom of priests in the earth.

This is beautifully revealed in that first song of redemption in Chapter xii. Closely connected with their regathering predicted in the preceding chapter is their grateful expression for the spiritual blessings they received. His anger is turned away, comfort has come at last. They sing and praise for Jehovah has done excellent things. Then the Lord gives them rest from their sorrows, fear and hard bondage (xiv:3). The songs of redemption in Chapters xxv-xxvi celebrate the same blessings. The forgiveness of their sins is promised in Chapter xxxiii:24, "the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins" (xliii:25). "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud,

thy sins return unto me, for I have redeemed thee" (xliv:22). This is followed by a song. "I will bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry and I will place salvation for Israel my glory" (xlvi:13). Read also liv:6-10. Then the Spirit of God will be poured out upon them. This is promised in Chapter xxxii:15. The promise is connected with their restoration to the land. The same promise is found in Chapter lix:20-21. First the Redeemer comes to Zion and the Spirit is promised unto Israel and Israel's seed. These great future blessings are especially revealed in Chapters lxi and lxii. "But ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord, men shall call you the ministers of our God." Thus their priestly calling among the nations will be realized. But when? After the day of vengeance, the second coming of the Lord (verse 2). The same blessings are stated in verses 7 and 10. Then they shall be called "the holy people," "the redeemed of the Lord" (lxii:12). In one day the new birth of the nation will take place (lxvi:8).

But let us understand that these blessings are not for the apostate portion of the nation. Millennial Dawnism, as well as others, claims that all Israel will receive these blessings, not alone the wicked element which sides with the man of sin and worships him, but also all the past generations who died in their sins will be raised up and brought back to the land and possess these things. No such teaching is found in the Word. Ezekiel xxxvii, the vision of the raising up of the dry bones, has nothing to do with a physical resurrection; it is a type of their national restoration. Ezekiel xx:38 makes it clear that the rebels, the apostates, will have no share in these blessings. These will not enter into the land saith the Lord. Two parts of the people will be cut off and die and the third part only shall be brought through the fire.

The Blessings for Israel's Land. The land of Israel, Palestine, is called by Isaiah "Immanuel's land" (viii:). Desolation has come upon it on account of the transgressions of the people. It is now an unfruitful land, a land of wastes and ruins. But there is a glorious future for Immanuel's land and He who lived His blessed life in that land, where He shed His blood and died, will also make it a glorious land. We can only link a few passages together where this is promised. Read xxx:23-26; lx:17-22; lxi:4; lxii:4-5; lxiv:21-24.

The Future of Jerusalem. Jerusalem, still trodden down by the Gentiles, has a glorious future. It will become the great capital of the Kingdom, which will cover the whole earth. In Chapter i Isaiah speaks of Jerusalem as a harlot and that

murderers dwell in it. This is true now and blood guiltiness rests upon it. But *afterward,* Isaiah announces, "thou shalt be called the City of Righteousness, the faithful city." That will be after the Lord has come. Then "out of Zion shall go forth the law and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (ii:3). The Holy One of Israel will make His dwelling place there and cover it with his Glory (iv:2-6; xi:9-10; xii:6; xxiv:23). Then they will rejoice on account of it. "In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; we have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks" (xxvi:1). xxxiii:20-21 shows another picture of Zion and Jerusalem. Also liv:11-14; Jerusalem will be a praise in the earth (lxii:7). "But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem and joy in my people, and the voice of weeping shall no more be heard in her, nor the voice of crying" (lxv:18-19). What a beautiful word this is! His people rejoice in Him and He rejoices in them. Jerusalem has become at last the place of joy and peace and Jerusalem is His joy. Then He will fully have the travail of His soul and be satisfied. Once more Jerusalem is mentioned in the last chapter. "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her, rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her" (lxvi:10). The nations redeemed will rejoice. But we may well think of the joy of the glorified Saints, including all the Saints, both the Old Testament and New Testament Saints. They all loved Jerusalem. We love Jerusalem, and when He rejoices in the accomplishment of His purposes we shall rejoice with Him. His joy will be our joy in Glory.

The Future Blessings of the Nations. Closely linked with these great future blessings and glories for Israel His people are the blessings of the Gentiles. The many predictions which concern the Gentiles cannot be fulfilled till Israel and Jerusalem have entered into their blessing. The conversion of the world is nowhere taught to take place in this present age through the church, but it is always found in connection with converted Israel. This is an important principle. The day of the Lord will bring great judgments for the Gentile world. When these judgments are in the earth the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness (Chapter xxvi:9). The Lord will deal in great and world-wide judgments with the Gentiles, especially with those which had the light and turned from the light. But there will be Gentiles who turn to God during these great judgments and believe the testimony, the Gospel of the Kingdom, preached

at that time (Matthew xxiv:14). What are the blessings promised to these nations? We touch upon a few. In Chapter ii:2-4 we find one of the most comprehensive. The nations will go up to that house of the Lord, which is yet to be built and which will be, according to another prophecy, a house of prayer for all nations. This great prediction is sadly spiritualized. It is applied to the church; and the fulfilment was, it is claimed, when the Lord selected the twelve Apostles on a mountain. It has nothing whatever to do with the church nor with the church age. When Jerusalem has been restored, the nations which are left will go there to worship. Then war will end and not before. This is God's peace program. In xi:9-10 we read that the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord and the Gentiles will seek Him. The great things, which He hath done, will be known in all the earth (xii:5). Greater still is the vision of Chapter xxv:6-8. A feast of fat things will be made. Now God has spread the Gospel feast and invites all to come. "Come, for all things are now ready." But the invitation to this feast will soon end. Then comes "the supper of the great God," a fearful judgment to which the fowls of heaven are invited (Rev. xix:16-18). This is followed by the feast of all peoples. The veil which is now over the heathen nations will be destroyed and all tears will be wiped away; the tears of sickness, the tears of want, the tears of affliction, the tears of sorrow. The gathering of the nations will be to Israel; they will be joined to them and thus the Kingdom will extend over the whole earth. "Lift up thine eyes round about and behold, all these gather themselves together and come to thee" (xlix:18). World conversion, the multitude of nations brought to the Knowledge of God (not into the church) is beautifully predicted in Chapter lx. First we see the Glory of the Lord shining forth; this is His Second Coming. But in what state does He find the earth? "Behold, darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people." This is the apostasy, the moral and spiritual darkness the Lord will find on the earth. It will soon be changed by His glorious appearing. The Gentiles will then be brought to that light.

"And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see; all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at *thy* side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the

dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall show forth the praises of the Lord. All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee: they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and will glorify the house of my glory. Who *are* these *that* fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows? Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee. And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee; for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favor have I had mercy on thee. Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that *men* may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and *that* their kings *may be* brought. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, *those* nations shall be utterly wasted" (lx:3-12).

This is the vision of the Kingdom to come. That coming age, introduced by the visible and glorious Coming of Christ, will mean the end of idolatry and the worshipping of the Lord. "All flesh shall come to worship before me, saith Jehovah" (lxvi:23).

The Blessings for all Creation. In Romans viii we read of the future and complete deliverance of groaning creation. It will come with the manifestation of the sons of God. That manifestation takes place when the Lord Jesus Christ comes again. He who created all things and whose creation was marred by sin; He who came into His creation and died for the creature's sin, will in that coming day deliver creation from its curse. The blessings of a delivered creation were beheld by Isaiah.

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den" (xi:6-8).

Also read Chapter lxv:25. Only the serpent will continue to crawl in the dust as an abiding witness of Satan and sin; also as a warning, for after the Kingdom age Satan will be loosed for a little season (Rev. xx:7).

All waits for the coming of these great blessings and glories. We insist again that they cannot come till "that day" of Isaiah's vision has appeared. It will surely come, though it has tarried

long. Judgment ends the present age and Blessings for Israel, the nations and all creation are the characteristics of the age to come. The church and her heavenly destiny was not seen by Isaiah. In the New Testament we read exclusively of the church, how it began and how it will suddenly end. When the predicted judgments smite the earth the true church is gathered home and is in His presence. Her destiny is not in an earthly Kingdom, an earthly Jerusalem, but with the King, the Lord of Glory in the heavenly Jerusalem. The destiny of the church is not to be ruled over in the Kingdom, but to rule over the Kingdom. May God's Spirit give unto us the power to enjoy these great revelations and rejoice in them even before they are accomplished.

THE ACTORS OF THE PERIOD OF ISAIAH.

Chronologically Arranged.

Before Christ.

765.	Isaiah born.
789-740.	Uzziah.
784-745.	Jeroboam II.
745-727.	Tiglath-pileser III.
740.	The Call of Isaiah's Vision, Chapter VI.
740-736.	Jotham.
738.	Arpad, Calno, Carchemish and Damascus taken by Tiglath-pileser III.
745-737.	Menahem.
737-736.	Pekahiah.
736-730.	Pekah.
736-727.	Ahaz.
734.	Syro-Ephraimitic war; Gaza captured by Tiglath-pileser III; Galilee carried captive to Assyria.
732.	Damascus taken by Tiglath-pileser III.
730-722.	Hoshea.
727-699.	Hezekiah.
727-722.	Shalmaneser IV.
722.	Fall of Samaria; end of the kingdom of Israel.
722-705.	Sargon II.
721-709.	Babylonia under Merodach-Baladan.
720.	Battle of Karkar; Sargon II conquers Arpad, Hammath and Damascus. Battle of Raphia.
717.	Sargon II conquers the Hittites, takes Carchemish, their capital.
714.	Hezekiah's sickness.
712.	Merodach-Baladan sent messengers to Hezekiah.
711.	Siege of Ashdod by Sargon II.
709.	Merodach-Baladan driven from Babylonia by Sargon II.
705-681.	Sennacherib.
703.	Merodach-Baladan again king over Babylonia.
701.	Siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib; Judah, Moab, Edom, Ammon and Philistia made to pay tribute. Tirhakah (afterwards "king of Ethiopia") head of the Egyptian army under Shabaka.
699-643.	Manasseh, king of Judah. Tradition claims that under Manasseh, Isaiah suffered martyrdom.

JEREMIAH

The Prophet Jeremiah

Introduction.

This Book starts with information concerning the person of Jeremiah, the time when he was called to the office of a prophet, and the period of time during which he exercised his ministry.

Jeremiah means "exalted of the Lord," or, "established by the Lord." He was the son of Hilkiah. Some have indentified the father of Jeremiah with the high-priest Hilkiah, who was such a power in Josiah's great reformation work. This is incorrect. The high-priest Hilkiah was of the line of Eleazar, as recorded in 1 Chronicles vi:4, 13. The father of the prophet Jeremiah was, we read in the first verse of this book, of the priests that were in Anathoth; the priests who lived there were of the line of Ithamar. (See 1 Kings ii:26; 1 Chronicles xxiv:3, 6.) Anathoth, the home of Jeremiah, was in Benjamin, about three miles northeast of Jerusalem.

The first time the Word of the Lord came to young Jeremiah, for he was but a child, was in the thirteenth year of King Josiah, or just a year after the eventful reformation accomplished by that good man. We know but little of the activity of the prophet during the subsequent reign of Josiah. Only one message is timed "in the days of Josiah the King" (iii:6). In the history of that illustrious King of Judah we read nothing of Jeremiah, with the exception of the brief statement, "and Jeremiah lamented for Josiah" (2 Chron. xxxv:25). It seems that the third verse gives the period covering the larger part of the ministry of this prophet. The Word of the Lord came unto him "also in the days of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, unto the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the son of Josiah, the king of Judah, unto the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month."

The book which bears this prophet's name abounds in personal allusions. In fact no other prophet in his character, in the exercise of his soul, and in his experience is so fully portrayed as Jeremiah; not even Ezekiel and Daniel whom, with Habakkuk and Zephaniah, were his contemporaries. The study of this great man of God is deeply interesting.

He has been called "the weeping prophet" and is generally known by that name. No other prophet wept like Jeremiah. That outburst in his lamentations, "For these things I weep; mine eye, mine eye, runneth down with water" (i:16) shows how tender hearted he was, and how his tears flowed freely. But he was something else beside the weeping prophet. He was a man of great courage, with the boldness

of a lion. In the presence of His Lord he was prostrate and broken, one who trembled at His Word, filled with godly fear. He was a man of prayer and faith in the Lord and faithful in the discharge of his great commission.

His Life of Service and Suffering.

His lot was one of great solitude; he was divinely commanded to remain unmarried (xvi:2). He was forbidden to enter the house of joy and feasting (xvi:8). Reproach and derision was his daily portion (xx:8). He was betrayed by his own kindred (xii:6), and his fellow citizens at Anathoth wanted to kill him (xi:21). Then, in the first part of his book, we read of the inner struggles he had, the spiritual conflict, when everybody was against him. In the bitterness of his spirit he spoke of himself as "a man of contention to the whole earth" (xv:10). He even doubted whether his whole work was not a delusion and a lie (xx:7), and like Job he cursed the day of his birth (xx:14). When the Chaldeans came to the front and Jeremiah heard from the Lord that Nebuchadnezzar was called as His servant to receive the dominion from His hands (xxxvii:6), Jeremiah urged submission. This stamped him as a traitor. False prophets appeared who contradicted him with their false messages; he committed his cause to the Lord. On one occasion when the temple courts were filled with thousands of worshippers, he appeared and uttered the message that Jerusalem would be a curse, that the temple should share the fate of the tabernacle at Shiloh (xxvi:6). Then the great conflict began. The priests, the false prophets and the people demanded his death (xxvi:8). The Lord graciously protected him through chosen instruments. Still greater were his sufferings under Zedekiah. His struggles with the false prophets continued; they called him a madman (xxix:26), and urged his imprisonment. He then appeared in the streets of Jerusalem with bonds and yokes upon his neck (xxvii:2), showing the coming fate of Judah. A false prophet broke the offensive symbol and gave a lying message that the Chaldeans should be destroyed within two years. Then the Egyptian army approached, and the Chaldeans hastened away; it created a dangerous condition for Jeremiah. He sought to escape to his home town Anathoth; it was discovered, and he was charged with falling to the Chaldeans as others did (xxxvii:14). In spite of his denial, he was thrown into a dungeon. Later he was thrown into the prison pit by the princes to die there. From that horrible fate he was again mercifully delivered. When the city fell, Nebuchadnezzar protected his person (xxxix:11), and after being carried away with other captives as far as Ramah, he set him free. It was left to him whether he would go to Babylon to live under the special protection of the king, or remain in the land with the governor Gedaliah.

He chose the latter. But Gedaliah was murdered by Ishmael and his associates. Then the people forced him to emigrate with them to Egypt. The last glimpse of the prophet's life we have of him is in Tehpanes, uttering there a final protest and a great message. Nothing is known of the details of his death.

"He is preeminently the man that hath seen afflictions (Lam. iii:1). He witnessed the departure one by one, of all his hopes of national reformation and deliverance. He is forced to appear as a prophet of evil, dashing to the ground the false hopes with which the people were deluded. Other prophets, Samuel, Elisha, Isaiah, had been sent to arouse the people to resistance. He has been brought to the conclusion, bitter as it is, that the only safety for his people lies in their acceptance of that which they think is the worst evil, that brings on him the charge of treachery. If it were not for his trust in the God of Israel, for his hope of a better future to be brought out of all this chaos and darkness, his heart would fail within him. But that vision is clear and bright, and it gives to him, almost as fully as to Isaiah, the character of a prophet of Glory. He is not merely an Israelite looking forward to a national restoration. In the midst of all the woes he utters against the nearby nations, he has hopes and promises for them also. In that stormy sunset of prophecy, he beholds, in spirit, the dawn of a brighter day. He sees that, if there is any hope of salvation for his people, it cannot be by a return to the old system and the old ordinances, divine though they had once been. There must be a New Covenant. That word, destined to be so full of power for after ages, appears first in his prophecies. The relations between the people and the Lord of Israel, between mankind and God, must rest, not on on an outward law, with its requirements of obedience, but on an inward fellowship with Him and the consciousness of entire dependence. For all this the prophet saw clearly there must be a personal center. The Kingdom of God could not be manifested but through a perfect righteous man, ruling over men on earth. They gather round the person of Christ, the Jehovah Zdidkenu—the Lord our Righteousness, the Son of David, Israel's coming king."

The Authorship of Jeremiah.

The book begins with "The words of Jeremiah," and it closes with chapter li:64 with the statement,"thus far are the words of Jeremiah." The final chapter is an addition of a historial character. That Jeremiah must be the author of the greater part of the book is proven by the many personal references which only the prophet himself could have written. No other prophet was so frequently commanded to write as Jeremiah was. "Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book" (xxx:2). "Take thee the roll of a book and write therein all

the words that I have spoken" (xxxvi:2). Then Baruch witnessed that he wrote all these words which came from Jeremiah's lips in a book (xxxvi:17); and when the roll was burned the Lord said, "Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll" (xxxvi:28). "So Jeremiah wrote in a book" (li:60). Who are the men who try to make us believe that Jeremiah did not write these words? Baruch, his secretary, who took the dictations from the lips of the prophet (xxxvi:27) may have arranged, under the direction of Jeremiah, the different prophecies. The language used is the language of his time and is tinged with Aramaic. The style does not compare with that of Isaiah.

There are, of course, many difficulties in connection with the text. For instance, the Greek Version (the Septuagint) differs more widely from the Hebrew than that of any other portion of the Old Testament. Numerous passages like vii:1-2, xvii:1-4, xxxiii:14-26, etc., are omitted in the Greek version. Inasmuch as the Hebrew is the oldest and the Septuagint was made from the Hebrew, the latter is the correct text. The critical school has made much out of these apparent difficulties and the disorder and unchronological character of the book. Therefore Jeremiah has suffered just as much in the dissecting room of the destructive critics as Isaiah and Moses. Thus Peake in his commentary on Jeremiah uses nine symbolic letters to show which is which.

J. Which stands for prophecies of which Jeremiah is most likely the author. *S.* This stands for certain supplementers. *JS.* This stands for the words of Jeremiah worked over by a supplementer; nobody knows who he was. *B.* This means Baruch and his production. *BS.* This means that Baruch's words were supplemented by some more unknown supplementers. *R.* This stands for Redactor, whoever he was. *I.* Here we have an unknown author who, according to the critics wrote chapter x:1-16. *K.* Here is another unknown gentleman, the author of xvii:19, etc. *E.* This letter denotes extracts from 2 Kings.

It is of little interest to quote the ramblings of Duhm, Ryssell, Hitizig, Renan and others about the authorship and compliation of Jeremiah. Not one of these scholars agree. They have theories but no certainties. How simple it is to believe the beginning and the end of this book, that here are "the words of Jeremiah." And though King Jehoiakim tried to destroy these words, they still live and they will live on in our days, in spite of the successors of the wicked king, the professors of apostasy, who are trying to give Christendom an abridged Bible.

That the book appears disjointed and is unchronological is no argument against its authenticity. The Companion Bible gives the following: "The prophecies of Jeremiah do not profess to be given in chronological order; nor is there any reason why they should be so given. Why, we ask, should modern critics first assume that they ought to be,

and then condemn them because they are not? It is the historical portions, which concern Jehoiakim and Zedekiah that are chiefly so affected; and who was Jehoiakim that his history should be of any importance? Was it not he who cut up the Word of the Lord with a penknife and cast it into the fire? Why should not his history be cut up? Zedekiah rejected the same Word of Jehovah. Why should his history be respected?"

The Message of Jeremiah.

His message is first a message which charges the people with having forsaken Jehovah. The sins of the people are uncovered, especially the sins of false worship and idolatry. Connected with this are the appeals to return unto the Lord with the promises of the mercy of Jehovah. The impenitent condition of the people is foreseen and judgment is announced. Then follow the messages which make known Jehovah's determination to punish Jerusalem, and further announcement of the impending judgment. But while Jeremiah gave the messages of warning of the coming disaster of Nebuchadnezzar's conquest, he also received prophecies concerning the future. Thus in chapter xxiii we find a great prophecy of restoration. He speaks of the days when the righteous Branch, the King, is to reign, when Judah will be saved and Israel dwell safely. Who that King is, every believer knows. His name is "Jehovah our Righteousness." It is the Lord Jesus Christ. Greater still is the great prophecy contained in chapters xxx-xxxi. Here we find the prophecy of the New Covenant to be made with the house of Judah and the house of Israel. Chapter xxxiii contains another prophetic restoration message. Chapters xlvi-li contain prophecies against Gentile nations.

The personal experience and the sufferings of this prophet are of a typical character, like the experiences and sufferings of other men of God in the Old Testament. The following passages make Jeremiah a type of Christ: Chapter xi:19, xiii:17, xx:7 (last sentence), xx:10, xxvi:11, 15; Lamentations i:12, iii:14.

The Divisions of Jeremiah

We have already referred in the introduction to the charge made by the critics that the Book of Jeremiah is unchronological and lacks proper arrangement. Says one critic, "as the book now stands, there is nothing but the wildest confusion, a preposterous jumbling together of prophecies of different dates." Attempts have therefore been made to reconstruct the book on a chronological basis, but none of these are satisfactory. On the other hand, some able scholars have come to the conclusion that we possess the book substantially in the same state as that in which it left the hands of the prophet and his secretary Baruch. We believe this is correct. If Jeremiah was guided by the Spirit of God in writing and dictating his great messages, he wrote them down just as the Spirit wanted to have them written down. If some things appear disjointed, or out of the chronological order, there must be some wise purpose in it. We shall discover this as we proceed with the analysis and in our annotations.

To enjoy fully the book of Jeremiah a good knowledge of the historical setting is eminently necessary. We have given many references in the annotations which will help in this direction.

We call attention first to the two main divisions of the book. The first constitutes the greater part of the book, from chapters i-xlv. This portion has the full ministry of the prophet during the reign of Josiah, the brief reign of Jehoahaz (Shallum; see chapters xxii:10–12); the reign of Jehoiakim, Jehoiakin (Coniah) and the reign of Zedekiah. The second division contains the prophecies against Gentile nations, that is chapters xlvi-li. The last chapter is an appendix corresponding in its history to 2 Kings xxv. Some have looked upon this appendix as the introduction to the "Lamentations."

The prophecies historically according to the reign of Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiakin and Zedekiah may be arranged as follows:

Under the Reign of Josiah. The call of Jeremiah and probably the greater part of chapters i-vi.

Under the Reign of Jehoahaz. The prophecy contained in chapters xxii:10–12.

Under the Reign of Jehoiakim. Chapters vii-xx, xxv-xxvi, xxxv-xxxvi, xlvi:1–12, xlvii, xlix.

Under the Reign of Jehoiakin (Coniah; Jeconiah). Chapters xxii and xxiii.

Under the Reign of Zedekiah. Chapters xxi, xxiv, xxvii, xxviii, xxix, xxx-xxxiv, xxxvii-xliv, xlvi:13–28; l and li.

We make the following divisions for the study of this book:

I. **THE PROPHET'S CALL TO REPENTANCE. THE NATION'S IMPENITENCE. THE JUDGMENT ANNOUNCED.** Chapters i-xiii.

II. **THE PROPHET'S MINISTRY BEFORE THE FALL OF JERUSALEM. THE PROPHECIES OF JUDGMENT AND RESTORATION. THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF JEREMIAH. HIS FAITHFULNESS AND HIS SUFFERING.** Chapters xiv-xxxix.

III. **AFTER THE FALL OF JERUSALEM.** Chapters xl-xlv.

IV. **THE PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE GENTILE NATIONS.** Chapters xlvi-li.

V. **THE HISTORICAL APPENDIX.** Chapter lii.

The different subdivisions will appear in the analysis.

Analysis and Annotations

I. THE CALL TO REPENTANCE. THE IMPENITENCE OF THE PEOPLE. THE JUDGMENT ANNOUNCED.

Chapter i-xiii.

THE CALL OF THE PROPHET

CHAPTER I.

1. The Introduction. 1-3.
2. The Divine Call. 4-10.
3. The Renewed Call and the First Visions. 11-19.

1. The Introduction: Verses 1–3. The first three verses introduce us to the person of the prophet, to the time the Word of the Lord came unto him, and to the sphere of his ministry. Jeremiah's father, Hilkiah, was a priest of the line of Ithamar; his home was Anathoth of Benjamin. (See general introduction.)

2. The Divine Call: Verses 4–10. "Then the Word of the Lord came unto me" (verse 4). The prophet is the writer who tells us how he was called into the office of a prophet. A sovereign, ominscient and omnipotent Lord speaks to and informs the young Jeremiah that He knew him, that his call was prenatal. He had been chosen and set apart for the specific work which he now was to undertake. (See Isa. xlix:1; Gal. i:15, 16.) What comfort this assuring knowledge must have been to the prophet in his trying ministry, in the persecutions which were his portion and the suffering he passed through! The Lord had called him, the Lord knew all that would take place, and He had the power to sustain him. And He is the same Lord today, and Jeremiah's comfort is still the comfort of His trusting people.

Jeremiah expresses at once his fear. Like Moses (Exod. iv:10), he manifests self-distrust. He was but a child, not in the sense of a mere child, but a youth. The Septuagint translates it, "I am too young." After that the Lord encouraged him by the promise of His presence, "I am with thee to deliver thee." Then He touched his mouth and said, "Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth." He was the mouthpiece of Jehovah, Who commissioned him to fulfill a ministry over nations and kingdoms, to announce the overthrow of them by the judgments of the Lord.

3. The Renewed Call and the First Visions: Verse 11:19. Some think that this renewed call came in the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim. There is nothing in the text to indicate this. The first vision is that of the rod of the almond tree. The Hebrew word for almond is "*Shakad*," which means to watch, to wake early. It is the first tree which shows the return of Spring. It denotes the early fulfilment of the judgment purposes of the Lord. The vision of the seething pot toward the North denotes the coming invasion by the kingdom of the North, that is, the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar. Then follows the renewed commission with a threat in case of disobedience; if his fearfulness would lead him to abandon the commission. More than that, the Lord, knowing the fears of the servant He had called and separated, encouraged him and once more promised him, "I am with thee saith the Lord, to deliver thee."

EXPOSTULATION AND IMPEACHMENT.

CHAPTER II-III:5.

1. His Love and Kindness to Jerusalem. **1-3.**
2. The Unfaithful People. 4-11.
3. The Two Evils and the Results. 12-18.
4. Impeachment. 19-30.
5. Expostulation. 31-37.
6. Jehovah Waiting to Show Mercy. Chapter iii:1-5.

1. His Love and Kindness Towards Jerusalem: Verses 1–3. The first message Jeremiah received begins with re-

minding Jerusalem of the kindness Jehovah bestowed upon the nation in her youth, and how she went after Him in the wilderness. He had separated Israel to belong to Him, to be a holy nation, the first fruits of His increase, which probably means that other nations should through Israel be called to know Him. He was their protector and those who tried to devour them would be held guilty.

2. The Unfaithful People: Verses 4–11. After Jehovah had called to the remembrance of the people the days of her youth, He reproves them for their unfaithfulness. This is the opening chapter of the roll which Jehudi read in the presence of Jehoiakim, which he threw into the fire after he had mutilated it with his penknife (chapter xxxvi:23). The remonstrance starts with a pathetic question: "What iniquity have your fathers found in Me, that they are gone far from Me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?" Was there anything unrighteous in Him: had He dealt in a treacherous way? Was the fault in Jehovah that they had left Him? They had not thought on His faithfulness as He had led them out of Egypt, through the desert and the shadows of death. It was forgotten by them, and when Jehovah brought them to the land of promise they had defiled the land. Priests, pastors and prophets had apostatized. Thus Jehovah states His case to plead with them and their children. Their folly and ingratitude was worse than that of heathen nations. Such was the failure of the favored nation. The failure of Christendom is even greater when we think of the greater manifestation of God's love in the gift of His Son, and the greater blessing and deliverance.

3. The Two Evils and the Result: Verses 12–18. The two evils are, forsaking Jehovah, the fountain of living waters, and the hewing for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water. Jehovah was the storehouse of the living waters, put at the disposal of His people without money and without price. But instead of confessing, "All my springs are in Thee," they had left Him, the source of life and comfort; and turned to broken cisterns of

their own invention, as well as to the idols and worshipped them. It is so among the professing people of God in this dispensation; the two evils are present with us also. The result for Israel was enslavement. The young lions came (the Assyrian invasion) and made the land waste. Noph (Memphis) and Tahpanhes (Daphnae), that is, Egypt, did the same. It came as the fruit of having forsaken the fountain of living water.

4. Impeachment: Verses 19–30. The impeachment begins with the solemn statement: "Know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken Jehovah Thy God, and that my fear is not in Thee, saith the Lord God of hosts." They had broken the covenant and played the harlot. The noble vine He had planted had degenerated. Their iniquity was marked before the Lord, and nothing that they did could remove the stain (verse 22). Yet they denied their guilt of going after idols. And when the Lord tells them, "withhold thy foot from being unshod," that is, running so much after strange gods, so that the feet become unshod, by wearing out the sandals, they boldly declared, "There is no hope; no, for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go." Their backs and their faces were turned from Jehovah. But when the time of trouble comes, they will say, "Arise, save us." But could or would the false gods they had made respond and save them? Some day a remnant of that nation will turn to the Lord and cry, "Arise, save us," and He will answer.

5. Expostulation: Verses 31–37. Israel's conduct was incomprehensible. Once more it is the "Why" of Jehovah. What had He done that they should turn away from Him? Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet His people had forgotten Him, who had loved and adorned them, days without number. He will plead with them because they said, I have not sinned.

6. Jehovah Waiting to Show Mercy. Chapter iii:1–5. Here is the first time the gracious invitation is given, "Return again to Me, saith the Lord." And how many times

after, the Lord pleads in the riches of His mercy for His people to return unto Him and offers them forgiveness.

THE CALL TO REPENTANCE AND JUDGMENT ANNOUNCED.

CHAPTERS III:6: VI.

Chapter III.

1. The Contrast between Backslidden Israel and Treacherous Judah. 6-10.
2. The Call to Return and the Promised Glory. 12-18.
3. The Future True Repentance Predicted and Anticipated. 19-25.

1. The Contrast Between Backslidden Israel and Treacherous Judah: Verses 6–11. The message which begins with the sixth verse was given to Jeremiah during the reign of Josiah. There is then, first of all, a contrast between Israel (the ten tribes) and her sister Judah. (Compare with Ezekiel xxiii.) The house of Israel, the northern kingdom was judged first by the Lord. She played the harlot; after she had done so, the Lord said, "Turn thou to Me." She refused, and her treacherous sister the house of Judah saw it. And when the Lord dealt with the house of Israel in judgment and they were carried away, Judah did not fear but played the harlot. The tenth verse proves conclusively that the reformation under Josiah was not a true spiritual revival: "And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not returned unto Me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the Lord."

2. The Call to Return and the Promised Glory: Verses 12–18. Here is a message to be proclaimed toward the North, calling on backsliding Israel to return. He promises mercy to them. One hundred years before, the house of Israel had gone northward as captives. The Lord knew where they dwelt and sent them this message of mercy. He knows today where the house of Israel is, the ten tribes, and at some future time the gracious offer given here will be consummated in their return. These verses are prophetic. They speak of the time when the chosen people will return.

Then Jerusalem will be called "the throne of the Lord." Israel will be converted. All the nations will be gathered unto the Name of Jehovah; the house of Judah with the house of Israel will be reunited. That will be when the King our ever blessed Lord comes back.

3. The Future True Repentance Predicted and Anticipated: Verses 19–25. What the future true repentance of the people will be is here predicted and anticipated. There will be weeping and supplications. They will acknowledge that true salvation is in the Lord. They will confess their sins and their disobedience.

CHAPTER IV.

1. True Repentance and What It Means. 1-4.
2. The Alarm Sounded: Judgment Comes. 5-13.
3. The Doom of the Rebellious People. 14-22.
4. The Desolation of Israel's Land through Judgment. 23-31.

I. True Repentance and What it Means: Verses i:4. A return must be a return unto Him, Jehovah; anything less is insufficient. Their abominations must be judged and put away. Every return of backsliders must be in the same way—a true return to the Lord with confession of sin, self-judgment, and abandonment of evil. The circumsicion of the heart means regeneration. (See chapter xxxi:31–34, and Ezek. lxxxvi:26).

2. The Alarm Sounded: Judgment Comes: Verses 5–13. This is the first definite announcement of the coming judgment from the North, which Jeremiah had seen in the vision of the boiling pot toward the North (chapter i). The lion who comes, the destroyer of the Gentiles, who makes the land desolate, is Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. It is a very vivid description of the approaching judgment. Verse 10 means not that Jeremiah is reproaching the Lord for having deceived the people. Jeremiah did not preach peace, but the false prophets did. They came and spoke in the name of Jehovah, that there should be peace; and

Jehovah permitted as a judgment these prophets, and the message of these prophets. And thus they were deceived.

3. **The Doom of the Rebellious People: Verses 14–22.** The doom of Jerusalem and Judah is sealed; there can be no escape. Their ways and their doings brought all upon them. And when Jeremiah hears it from the lips of the Lord, he breaks out in a lament: "My bowels, My bowels! I am pained at my very heart. My heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war."

4. **The Desolation of Israel's Land through Judgment: Verses 23–31.** Then the Prophet has a vision of what will happen to the land of Israel, when the judgment threatened above has passed over it. The unscriptural invention and wicked teachings of Seventh Day Adventism applies this passage to the whole earth and teaches that when the Lord comes the whole earth will be laid waste. Like Isaiah xxiv, only Israel's land is in view. It must be not overlooked that the Lord said: "The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end." This is Israel's hope.

CHAPTER V.

1. The Apostate Conditions of Jerusalem. 1-9.
2. The Impending Judgment. 10-18.
3. Sowing and Reaping. 19-29.
4. The Horrible Thing. 30-31.

I. The Apostate Conditions of Jerusalem: Verses 1–9. So degenerate had the inhabitants of Jerusalem become that the Lord promised if but one man could be found in the city who executed judgment and sought the truth, He would pardon Jerusalem. It was a general apostasy. A similar apostasy is predicted for the end of our age. "Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh shall He find the faith on the earth? "They were foolish, saith the Lord; they broke the yoke and burst the bonds; they have refused to return. They were as fed horses in the morning; every one neighed after his neighbor's wife." Shall I not

visit these things, saith the Lord; and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"

2. The Impending Judgment: Verses 10–18. The judgment messages had not been believed by the people (verse 12). What the invader from the North will do to Israel is described in verses 15–17. Again the promise is given, "I will not make a full end with you." The Lord keeps in the midst of His people a remnant.

3. Sowing and Reaping: Verses 19–29. Their sowing was bringing a harvest. They asked, "Wherefore doeth the Lord our God all these things unto us?" He answers them that they had sown their evil seed in forsaking the Lord and serving strange gods; the harvest would be serving strangers in a strange land. The good things promised had been turned away by their sins and iniquities. The question of verse 9 is repeated in verse 29. And what was true of that generation, is true of this present age also. The seed which is being sown is Bible rejection, the rejection of the Gospel of Christ, the seed of apostasy, will bring a harvest of judgment as it did with Israel.

4. The Horrible Thing: Verses 30–31. False prophets, false priests and the people were satisfied with it. How is it going to be in the end? Both prophets and priests were in league against the prophet of God. They misled the people; they were a curse instead of a blessing. It is not unlike the religious conditions in Christendom today.

CHAPTER VI.

1. The Call to the Children of Benjamin. 1-8.
2. Corruption and the Deserved Judgment. 9-26.
3. The Prophet Addressed. 27-30.

1. The Call to the Children of Benjamin: Verses 1–8. The children of Benjamin are exhorted to flee for safety on account of the evil from the North. There were probably among the Benjamites God-fearing men. Those who heeded the call fled and escaped. It is a warning message which follows: "Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, let my soul

depart from thee; lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited." But they heeded it not.

2. Corruption and deserved Judgment: Verses 9–26. They did not hear because they had uncircumcised ears, neither had they delight in the Word of the Lord. How true this is today of the great mass of professing Christians! The Lord will now no longer restrain His fury; He will pour it out upon them. Coveteousness, the love of money, as it is in our day, was the controlling passion. Prophet and priest dealt falsely; their one message, like the one message of the prophet and priest today, was Peace, Peace, when there was no peace. Then once more the judgment from the North is announced (verses 18–26).

3. The Prophet Addressed: Verses 27–30. In the final paragraph of this chapter the Lord speaks intimately to the prophet. He is encouraged and strengthened. He is set as a tower and as a fortress. What a position of honor! May we consider it as we are as His believing people surrounded by the flood of apostasy; that we, too, are called to be a tower and a fortress.

THE PROPHET'S TEMPLE ADDRESS.

CHAPTERS VII-IX.

Chapter VII.

1. Amend your Ways and your Doings. 1-15.
2. No Prayer-answer to be Expected. 16-20.
3. Sacrifices Rejected; Obedience Demanded. 21-28.
4. Jerusalem's Rejection. 29-34.

1. Amend Your Ways and Your Doings: Verses 1–15. We call this next address of the prophet "the Temple address," because he was commanded to stand in the gate of the Lord's house. There he stood, a solitary figure, and said: "Hear the Word of the Lord, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship Jehovah." Their worship was but external. They trusted in the Temple of the Lord, as if with the house itself some kind of a blessing was con-

nected and the house would shield them from disaster. Micah gives the same delusion of the apostate people: "Yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord among us? no evil can come upon us" (Micah iii:11). Such a false trust in ordinances and outward worship is only too evident in Christendom also. The masses of unsaved people with their religious observances think it is a protection and insures the Lord's help and blessing. They trusted in lying words. They were thieves, murderers, adulterers, perjurers and idolators, and they thought if they go to the house of the Lord they would be delivered from these abominations. The Lord calls upon them to amend their ways and their doings, to work a better righteousness. They had made His house a den of robbers. This verse (verse 11) was quoted by our Lord in Matt. xxi:13. He tells them of the fate of Shiloh when it was overthrown on account of the wickedness of Israel; such would be the fate of the Temple (Psa. lxxviii:60). They would be cast out as the whole seed of Ephraim had been cast out.

2. No Prayer-Answer to be Expected: Verses 16–20. The Lord told the Prophet that no prayer of intercession would be answered. "I will not hear thee." What a word this is, coming from Him, who had told Israel to cry unto Him and He would answer. They had provoked Him by making cakes to the queen of heaven. They had fallen in with the worship of a female idol, so prevalent among the idolatrous nations which surrounded them, like the Phoenicians, the Assyrians, the Egyptians and the Babylonians. The Babylonian Venus, Ishtar, was called by them the queen of heaven. The Assyrian called her Beltis, the female form of Baal; they placed in sculpture a star over her head and called her "the mistress of the heavens." The Phoenicians worshipped this "queen of heaven" under the name of Ashtoreth or Astarte. This wicked worship, with which all kinds of immoral ceremonies were connected, had been adopted by the Jews. The women made cakes to present to this goddess. Jewish tradition tells us that the image of the idol was stamped on each cake. This worship of "the

queen of heaven" is perpetuated in the mystical Babylon, Rome, the great whore and mother of harlots (Rev. xvii). Mary is called by Romanists "the queen of heaven" and "mistress of the heavens." It can be proven that Mariolatry is but the continuation of the Babylonish worship of the goddess they called "queen of heaven." If the Lord was provoked to anger because the women of Israel brought cakes to this queen of heaven, how much more is He provoked to anger with the idolatries of Papal Rome?

3. Sacrifices Rejected; Obedience Demanded: Verses 21–28. He brands their sacrifices as worthless. He gave no command concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices in the day He brought them out of Egypt. Destructive critics have built upon this verse (22) a puerile argument to prove that the law of sacrifices was not given by Moses, but introduced many centuries later. When the Lord first led them out of Egypt, He gave them no laws as to sacrifices, but asked obedience. They harkened not; nor did they in Jeremiah's day. It is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the Lord, nor receiveth correction.

4. Jerusalem's Rejection: Verses 29–34. The hair was cut off as a sign of mourning (Job i:20). Jerusalem is to lament in the high places. They have defiled His house. On the heights of Tophet, in the valley of the son of Hinnom, they had burned their children as a sacrifice to Moloch (2 Kings xxiii:10). The days were now to come when the same place should become the place of slaughter. The carcasses of the people should then be meat for the beasts of the earth; they should lie there unburied. Such was to be Jerusalem's rejection and judgment.

CHAPTER VIII.

1. The Horrors of the Invasion. 1-3.
2. Hardened Hearts and Retribution. 4-12.
3. Utter Destruction Threatened. 13-17.
4. The Prophet's Lamentation. 18-22.

1. The Horrors of the Invasion: Verses 1–3. These verses

must not be detached from the preceding chapter. The division of chapters is often unfortunate in this book. The invaders from the North would even have digged out the bones of the dead. Kings, priests, prophets and people who had worshipped the sun, the moon and the stars should be exposed and spread out before the sun and moon, remain unburied and become dung. We doubt not that all this was literally done during the Chaldean invasion.

2. Hardened Hearts and Retribution: Verses 4–12. They did not repent of their wickedness. Theirs was a perpetual backsliding. The stork knows his appointed time; the turtle, the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming, but they had hardened their hearts in such a manner that they knew not the judgment of the Lord. Hence the retribution (9–12).

3. Utter Destruction Threatened: Verses 13–17. The thirteenth verse shows the desolation which will fall upon the land when the Lord arises. The words of verses 14–16 were spoken by the prophet and not by the impenitent people as some take it. The 16th verse is extremely vivid.

4. The Prophet's Lamentation: Verses 18–22. His heart was faint in him. He is overwhelmed with sorrow. The harvest was passed, the summer gone and they were not saved. It is a mournful outburst.

CHAPTER IX.

1. The Prophet's Complaint and Jehovah's Answer. 1-9.
2. The Cause of Desolation and Destruction. 10-16.
3. The Call for the Mourning and Wailing Women. 17-22.
4. Glorying in the Lord in View of Judgment. 23-26.

1. The Prophet's Complaint and Jehovah's Answer: Verses 1–9. Here again is a deplorable break. The opening verses of this chapter belong to the preceding one. The Prophet still speaks. He is overwhelmed with sorrow; his eyes are fountains of tears. He weeps day and night over the slain. He wishes himself away in some wilderness, to be alone and separated from the adulterous generation.

Then follows a description of the moral corruption of the people. The Lord answered him and once more asks the question: "Shall not I visit them for these things? saith the Lord; shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" (See chapter v:9, 29.)

2. The Cause of Desolation and Destruction: Verses 10–16. Jerusalem will be heaps, ruins and a den of dragons. The cities of Judah will be desolate. But why is it like this? Because they forsook His law, obeyed not His voice, and practised idolatries. Therefore their portion would be wormwood and gall. They would be scattered among the nations.

3. The Call to the Mourning and Wailing Women: Verses 17–22. The time of wailing and mourning is at hand. "For death is come up into our windows, and is entered into our palaces, to cut off the children from without and the young men from the street." Pestilence was to sweep over them and enter into their habitations. Hence the call to the professional wailers to sing the mournful dirges of death. These wailing women are also called "wise women," for they dabbled in magical, occult things, in familiar spirits and in soothsaying.

4. Glorying in the Lord in View of Judgment: Verses 23–26. The days were coming when judgment would strike Jews and Gentiles, for the uncircumcised Gentiles and for Israel, uncircumcised in heart. In view of these days of judgment the prophet exhorts to stop their boasts in wisdom, in might and in riches, for all availeth nothing. "But let him that glorieth glory in Me, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving kindness, judgment and righteousness, in the earth, for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." May we also glory in Him and not in the things of the dust, the temporal, the passing things, which are but for a moment! Let us remember "The Coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

THE VANITY OF IDOLS.

CHAPTER X.

1. Be not Dismayed at the Signs of Heaven. 1-5.
2. The Contrast: The Vanity of Idols and the Lord, the King of Nations. 6-18.
3. The Affliction of the Prophet and His Prayer. 19-25.

1. Be Not Dismayed at the Signs of Heaven: Verses 1–5. The heathen paid attention to the signs of heaven, such as eclipses, comets, meteoric showers, etc. They were dismayed at these things. All they did, their customs and observances in connection with idol worship, was nothing but vanity.

2. The Contrast: The Vanity of Idols and the Lord, the King of Nations: Verses 6–18. Idols are nothing, but the Lord God of Israel is all. He is the King of Nations, Who rules over all. He is the true God, the living God, the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth trembles and the nations shall not be able to abide His indignation. He made the earth by His power; He established the world by wisdom; He stretched out the heavens by His discretion. But what is man? Brutish in his knowledge.

3. The Affliction of the Prophet and His Prayer: Verses 19–25. Here we see how Jeremiah identified himself with the afflictions and sorrows of Jerusalem. In his prayer he pleads that the judgment might be only for correction and not for a complete and perpetual consummation. "O Lord correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing." He calls for judgment upon the nations. Well may we see in pleading Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, who is afflicted in Jerusalem's affliction, who identified himself with his people, a type and picture of Him who is greater than Jeremiah.

THE BROKEN COVENANT. THE PLOT AGAINST JEREMIAH.

CHAPTER XI.

1. The Broken Covenant. 1-17.
2. The Plot Revealed and Jehovah's Answer. 18-23.

1. The Broken Covenant: Verses 1–17. Jehovah had made a covenant with His people. He tells the prophet about it and the responsibility which was connected with that covenant. They were to obey His voice. Then should they be His people and He their God. And of this covenant it was written, "Cursed be the man that obeyeth not the words of this covenant." The prophet answered the Lord: "So be it Lord" (Amen). Then he is commanded to proclaim this covenant and tell the people that they had broken the covenant. They had followed the evil example of their fathers. They had burned incense to the idol gods. Therefore the prophet again is told not to pray for this adulterous generation," for I will not hear them in the time they cry unto Me in their trouble." Yet the Lord in spite of it all still calls them "My Beloved," though she had broken the covenant and worked lewdness. Verse 16 is used by the Spirit of God in Romans xi, the chapter which begins with the assurance that God has not cast away His people. The branches of the green olive tree are broken. Yet there is hope; they are still beloved for the Father's sake.

2. The Plot Revealed and Jehovah's Answer: Verses 18–23. The Lord revealed unto him their doings. He was ignorant of it, like a lamb or an ox brought to the slaughter. They wanted to cut him off from the land of the living. He calls for vengeance upon them, which is in full keeping with the law dispensation* and God's righteous government.

*Righteousness characterises the saint as well as love, and has its place where there are adversaries to that love and to the blessing of the loved people. It is the Spirit of prophecy, not the gospel, no doubt, because prophecy is connected with the government of God, not with His present dealings in sovereign grace. Hence in the Revelation vengeance is called for by the saints.—Synopsis.

The men of Anathoth had intimidated him by saying, "Prophesy not in the name of the Lord, that thou die not by our hand." The Lord answers him that their young men should die by the sword, and their sons and daughters by famine. No remnant of them should be left.

THE PROPHET'S PRAYER; THE HOUSE FORSAKEN, YET COMPASSION.

CHAPTER XII.

1. The Prophet's Prayer. 1-6.
2. The House Forsaken; Yet Compassion. 7-17.

1. The Prophet's Prayer: Verses 1–6. In his outburst of grief and in great mental perplexity Jeremiah states the old question, why does the righteous man suffer, why does the wicked prosper? And then the prayer for His intervention. Such will be again the case with the godly remnant in the end of this present age. They will suffer and be persecuted as godly Jeremiah was and pray as Jeremiah prayed: "Pull them out like sheep for the slaughter, and prepare them for the day of slaughter." The imprecatory psalms are of the same prophetic meaning. Jehovah's answer tells him that greater trials were in store for him (verses 5, 6).

2. The House Forsaken; Yet Compassion: Verses 7–17. The house is to be forsaken. The dearly beloved is to be given into the hands of the enemies. The sword of the Lord would now devour them. But there is the warning to the nations who touch His inheritance. He will deal with them in judgment as He dealt with Judah. Then we find the promise, "I will return and have compassion on them." This is still future. The compassion for Israel comes in the day of His return.

SIGNS, WARNINGS AND EXHORTATIONS.

CHAPTER XIII.

1. The Linen Girdle and the Filled Bottles. 1-14.
2. Hear and Give Glory. 15-21.
3. The Justice of the Judgment. 22-27.

1. The Linen Girdle and the Filled Bottles: Verses 1–14. The prophet enacts a sign, that of the linen girdle. After he had put on the girdle, he was told to hide it in a hole of the rock on the Euphrates. After many days, he was commanded to dig for the girdle. It was found marred and profitable for nothing. Was this only a vision, or did the prophet actually make the long journey to the Euphrates and then repeat it after many days? The latter is quite improbable, nor can the command be called a vision. The question is what river is meant, the river Euphrates or another river by a similar name? The Hebrew word for Euphrates is "*Perath*," and the word river is generally added to this word. In the text here it is missing. Now, three miles north of Anathoth there was a small river by the name of "*Parak*" (Josh. xviii:23). It probably means this place to which the prophet was commanded to go. Both words in the Hebrew spring from the same root.

The meaning of this symbolical action is explained. A girdle belonged to the priest. Israel was called to be the priestly nation. As a girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man, so the Lord had chosen Israel to cleave unto Him, "that they might be unto Me for a people," and for a name and for a glory. And as the girdle had become marred and profitable for nothing, so even would their pride, that in which they gloried as the chosen people, be marred.

The bottles filled with wine, dashed one against the other, is the symbol of their sin-intoxication and their destruction.

2. Hear and Give Glory: Verses 15–21. How patient and merciful is Jehovah! He interrupts His judgment message by calling on the people, whom He still loves, to

give ear and to give glory to Jehovah. It is the utterance of the Prophet, the outpouring of His love towards His people. The prophet addresses the king and the queen: "Humble yourselves." And then his heart seems to break in anticipation of their obstinacy." But if ye will not hear, my soul shall weep in secret places on account of your pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the Lord's flock is carried away captive."

3. The Justice of the Judgment: Verses 22–27. Wherefore? they asked. And He answers, "For the greatness of thine iniquity . . . because thou hast forgotten Me and trusted in falsehood." Woe unto thee, Jerusalem! wilt thou not be made clean? When shall it be? But could they do it themselves? "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to evil." The new heart is needed (Ezek. xxxvi); the new birth of which the Lord spoke to the teacher in Israel.

II. THE PROPHET'S MINISTRY BEFORE THE FALL OF JERUSALEM. THE PROPHECIES OF JUDGMENT AND RESTORATION. THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF JEREMIAH. HIS FAITHFULNESS AND HIS SUFFERING

Chapters xiv-xxxix

THE GREAT DROUGHT. THE SWORD, THE FAMINE AND THE PESTILENCE. THE PROPHET'S DEEP SOUL-EXERCISE.

CHAPTERS XIV-XV.

Chapter XIV.

1. The Description of the Drought. 1-6.
2. The Prophet's Priestly Intercession. 7-9.
3. The Answer. 10-18.
4. The Renewed Prayer. 19-22.

1. The Description of the Drought: Verses 1–6. The

vivid description of the great drought is given in these verses. The little ones sent forth for water returned empty handed. It is the picture of distress.

2. The Prophet's Priestly Intercession: Verses 7–9. And now the prophet's voice as intercessor is heard. Like Daniel (chapter ix), in his great prayer Jeremiah acknowledges the nation's sin as his own. But he trusts in the Lord and knows that He is "the hope of Israel," the Saviour. Blessed statements of faith which came from His lips: "Thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us—we are called by Thy Name—leave us not" (verse 9)! The Saviour and hope of Israel has surely not given up His people, though judgment had to do its work.

3. The Answer: Verses 10–18. They wandered away from Him, saith the Lord in answering Jeremiah. Their iniquities will be remembered and their sins visited. This is the demand of a righteous God. He is not going to hear their cry; the sword the famine and the pestilence will consume them. Jeremiah tells the Lord about the message of the false prophets. They had promised peace, just as the false teachers in Christendom do today. But they prophesied lies in His name; He had not sent them, nor commanded them nor had He spoken to them.

4. The Renewed Prayer: Verses 19–22. What soul stirring petitions these are! It is not the impenitent nation which speaks, but the prophet is pleading in the place of the people and for them.

CHAPTER XV.

1. The Answer. 1-9.
2. The Prophet's Grief and Sorrow; Jehovah's Answer. 10-21.

1. The Answer: Verses 1–9. The preceding prayer is now answered and the Lord tells Jeremiah that if Moses and Samuel, these two great men of intercessory prayer, were pleading, judgment would not be averted. What is in store for those who are appointed to death, for the sword, for the famine, for captivity, will be accomplished. There is no escape. They will be removed among all kingdoms

on account of Manasseh's great sin (2 Kings xxi:11–15). The terrors of judgment are described in verses 7–9. Their children will be taken; widows increase; the mother of seven children faints, because they are all taken from her.

2. The Prophet's Grief and Sorrow; Jehovah's Answer: Verses 10–21. Jeremiah is overwhelmed. He pronounces a "Woe" upon himself and declares that his mother has given birth to one who is a man of strife, of contention to the whole land. He has faithfully discharged his duty; he loved his people and they hated him beyond measure. Every one cursed him, as if he were a wicked man. What anguish of soul this implies! But then the Lord was near to cheer and comfort him, as He is near to us when we are in sorrow and all is dark and we are in despair. It would be well with him and with those, who, like Jeremiah, trust the Lord. But the remnant, too, would suffer with the nation's portion (13–14). This brings out another prayer from Jeremiah's heart. He pleads for revenge upon his adversaries and then prays, "Take me not away in Thy long-suffering, know that for Thy sake I have suffered rebuke." But while he prayed he also used the Word of God. "Thy words were found, and I did eat them." He fed on the bread of life. The word was unto him the joy and rejoicing of his heart. He knew from the Word that he was called by His Name. And we also can turn to the Word and feed on it. But how few can say, "Thy Word is the joy and rejoicing of my heart?" That Word on which Jeremiah fed, which filled his sorrowful heart, led him to separation. It will lead us also to separation in the evil day of departure from God and the threatening judgment. He sat alone; He refused to have anything to do with the assembly of mockers, those who denied His Word and His Name, who listened to the false prophets with their false message. Verse 18 must be interpreted in the sense that Jeremiah speaks as representing the godly remnant of Israel. There was such a remnant then in the midst of the wicked mass, there will be such a remnant again in the future, during the great tribulation, or, as Jeremiah calls that time,

"The time of Jacob's trouble." They suffer in the trials and judgments; they are fearful, yet trusting. Jeremiah is representative of this remnant. The answer the Lord gives in verses 19–21 must be explained in the same light. Verse 21 will find its final fulfillment of the future remnant when the Lord returns and redeems them from the hand of the wicked and the hand of the terrible, the two beasts of Revelation xiii.

THE COMING CALAMITIES: RESTORATION PROMISED. RUIN IMMINENT ON ACCOUNT OF JUDAH'S SIN. CONCERNING THE SABBATH. Chapters XVI-XVII.

CHAPTER XVI.

1. The Coming Calamities. 1-13.
2. The Coming Days of Restoration and Blessing. 14-21.

1. The Coming Calamities: Verses 1–13. In view of the coming calamities Jeremiah is bidden to remain unmarried and not to raise a family. The verses which describe the coming calamities need no further annotations.

2. The Coming Restoration and Blessing: Verses 14–21. The great dispersion was announced by the Lord in the preceding verse: "Therefore will I cast you out of this land, into a land that ye know not, neither ye nor your fathers; and there ye shall serve other gods day and night; where I will not show you favor." But is this to last forever? Is this dispersion permanent? Will they always be homeless wanderers? The next verse gives the answer: "I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers." They will be brought back from the land of the north and from all lands where they had been driven. It will be a greater deliverance than the deliverance out of Egypt. Critics have found fault with these verses: "They are out of place here, but whether inserted by accident, or whether to modify the painful impression of the prophecy of judgment in which they are inserted, we cannot say" (Prof. A. S. Peake). They are not out of place, nor inserted by some unknown hand. The Lord declares His gracious purposes

which will yet be accomplished. That these verses were not fulfilled in the return of the small remnant from Babylon is obvious. They will be fulfilled in the future, when the house of Israel and the house of Judah will be re-established in the land. Then the so-called "lost tribes" will be found again by Him for whom they were never lost, "For mine eyes are upon all their ways, they are not hid from my face neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes." He will send fishers and hunters to bring them forth. It is the same of which our Lord speaks in Matt. xxiv:31. The elect of whom the Lord speaks are not a spiritual Israel, but the elect nation Israel. Then the voice of the prophet is heard in verse 19 with a blessed prophetic declaration: "The Gentiles shall come unto Thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity and things wherein there is no profit." It denotes the conversion of the world, which in prophecy never precedes the restoration of Israel, but always follows that great coming event. (See Rom. xi:12, 15; Acts xv:14–17.)

CHAPTER XVII.

1. Judah's Sin. 1-4.
2. The Curse and the Blessing. 5-11.
3. The Worship of Jeremiah. 12-18.
4. Concerning the Sabbath. 19-27.

1. Judah's Sin: Verses 1–4. The sin of Judah was idolatry, engraven with a pen of iron, the point of a diamond, upon their heart (from whence it proceeded) and the horns of their altars. They had destroyed but a few years before the asherim (translated groves, a kind of sacred post), and now their children turned back to the abominable heathen cults. His anger and judgment must now be their portion.

2. The Curse and the Blessing: Verses 5–11. A curse is pronounced upon him who trusteth in man, who departeth from the Lord. For such a one there is no hope; he shall not see good; he must be an outcast, like the heath in the desert. And such is the natural condition of man, his heart

is departed from the Lord, he trusteth in himself, making flesh his arm to defend and to uphold. But blessing is for the man who trusteth in the Lord, whose hope the Lord is. Verse 8 contains the same truth as Psalm i:3. It is a description of the God-fearing in Israel, who knew the Lord, trusted and hoped in Him. He had called them to this place of blessing; He had encouraged them to trust in Him; He had manifested His glory and His power in their midst. But they turned away from Him, they leaned not on Him, but on the arm of flesh, on Egypt. The heart is the source of it, deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. The question, "Who can know it?" is answered, "I the Lord search the heart." He has sounded the depths of it and in His omniscience knew the shameful history of Israel, and all their backsliding. So He knew and knows what we are, yet in Sovereign Love and Grace He has loved us and bears with His own.

3. **The Worship of Jeremiah: Verse 12–18.** The worship of the prophet stands here also for the worship and soul exercise of the godly remnant of the Lord's people. The sanctuary of the godly is the glorious high throne, that throne which we know as the throne of Grace. In verse 14 there is expressed by the prophet in behalf of the God-fearing the need of His salvation. They mocked the prophet, "Where is the Word of the Lord? Let it come." So they will hate the remnant of the future (Isa. lxvi:5). And we know the prediction in Peter's second Epistle (2 Peter iii). Verse 18 corresponds to the imprecatory psalms. What Jeremiah prays, was fulfilled upon that evil generation; and some day the imprecatory psalms will be fulfilled when the Lord deals again in judgment with the nation.

4. **Concerning the Sabbath: Verses 19–27.** Kuenen and other critics deny the Jeremianic authorship of this passage. It is not out of keeping with the message of the Prophet. The Sabbath of which he is commanded to speak is the standard of Israel's spiritual condition, for it is the weekly reminder of Israel's covenant relation with Jehovah. If they neglected the Divine command, as they always did

in their departure from the Lord, it was the outward evidence that they had broken the covenant? If they really returned to the Lord they would show it by keeping the solemn Sabbaths and the Lord would bless them. But they obeyed not. This passage as well as others is used by the pernicious Seventh Day Adventistic Cult, which denies grace and turns back to the law. But the Sabbath has nothing to do with the church, nor has the church anything to do with the Sabbath. The Sabbath is an institution of the law in connection with Israel. The great documents addressed to the church, the Epistles, never mention the Sabbath once, nor is there anywhere in the Epistles an exhortation to keep the Sabbath.

THE POTTER AND THE CLAY.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1. In the Potter's House and the Message. 1-17.
2. The Plot against the Prophet and His Prayer. 18-23.

1. In the Potter's House and the Message: Verses 1–17. He was commanded to go to the house of a potter and watch his work. The vessel Jeremiah sees fashioned out of clay is marred; it did not turn out well. Then the clay was taken up again and made in another vessel as it seemed good to the potter to make it.

Then came the message: "O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand, O house of Israel." If the creature of the dust can do as he pleases with the clay, how much more the Sovereign God. The Holy Spirit evidently uses this in Romans ix:20–32.

If a nation is threatened with destruction and that nation turns to the Lord, He will repent of the evil pronounced upon them. This is fully illustrated in the case of Jonah's prediction, God given as it was, of Nineveh's overthrow. Nineveh repented and the judgment was not executed upon that generation. But if the Lord has promised a nation good and that nation does evil in His sight, He will repent

of the good He had promised unto them. Thus the potter's action is used to convey a great lesson, the lesson of God's sovereignty, to do as He pleaseth, yet always in perfect righteousness. If Israel had owned then the sin and guilt and turned to the Lord, He would have acted in sovereign grace towards them. Their answer was: "There is no hope; but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imaginations of his evil heart." What depravity and wicked boldness these words reveal! They refused to believe the message of the Lord. They pushed aside the hand which would snatch them out of the fire. They acknowledged the evil heart and deliberately declared to continue in wicked defiance of Jehovah. And is it any better in professing Christendom today? The answer of the Lord, an answer of kindness and long suffering follows.

2. The Plot Against the Prophet and His Prayer: Verses 18–23. They arose in rebellion against the messenger of Jehovah. They hated him. They would smite him with the tongue, malign him, bring false accusations against him. But the man of God does not take up their contentions. Like Hezekiah when the enemy reviled him, Jeremiah turned to the Lord. He tells the Lord all about it. Then he prays for judgment to fall upon them. Here once more we must look upon these words prophetically. Such expressions as used by the prophet here will, during the great tribulation, come from the lips of the remnant of Israel, who suffer from their enemies and who righteously call for heaven's vengeance, which will fall upon these enemies when Jehovah, our Lord, is manifested in glory.

THE BROKEN BOTTLE; PASHUR; JEREMIAH'S PERPLEXITY AND COMPLAINT. Chapters XIX-XX.

CHAPTER XIX.

1. The Broken Bottle and the Message. 1-13.
2. The Fate Announced in the Court of the Lord's House. 14-15.

1. The Broken Bottle and the Message: Verses 1–13.

He was to get a potter's earthen bottle accompanied by elders and priests, and go to the valley of the son of Hinnom. There he should proclaim the words Jehovah would breath into him. The message is another judgment message and needs no further comment. In Tophet, the valley of Hinnom, they had worked their abominations, burnt their sons with fire. Now it should become the valley of slaughter, so that their carcasses should be eaten by the fowls and wild beasts. He would cause them to eat the flesh of their loved ones. It was fulfilled during the siege of Jerusalem (Lam. iv:10). Then he broke the bottle as a sign that thus the people and the city should be broken.

2. The Fate Announced in the Court of the Lord's House: Verses 14–15. When the prophet returned from the valley of Hinnom he took his place in the court of the Lord's house and declared the fate of the city.

CHAPTER XX.

1. Pashur and Jeremiah. 1-6.
2. Jeremiah's Great Perplexity and Complaint. 7-18.

I. Pashur and Jeremiah: Verses 1–6. A great scene now follows the message in connection with the broken bottle. The great Pashur, the chief governor in the house of the Lord had heard of the message. He smites Jeremiah and puts him in the stocks, which must have been some form of cruel torture by which the victim was rendered helpless, besides being exposed to the vulgarity of the people who passed by and would taunt him. In this position Jeremiah remained all night before the high gate of Benjamin. In the morning he was released. He then speaks as only an inspired prophet can speak. His name Pashur (which means "most noble") should now be "Magor-missabib," which means "terror on every side." The awful fate of Pashur and his own is predicted. He is dumb; perhaps even then terror stricken as he looks into the flashing eyes of the man of God and listens to the fiery words.

2. Jeremiah's Great Perplexity and Complaint: Verses 7–18. What follows now is a most passionate outburst, revealing an unspeakable emotion of the soul, as perhaps nowhere else in the prophetic Scriptures. Even critics acknowledge this as "one of the most powerful and impressive passages in the whole of the prophetic literature, a passage which takes us, as no other, not only into the depths of the prophet's soul, but into the secrets of his prophetic consciousness." "Lord," he cries, "Thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived." The Revised Version has translated it, "Thou hast persuaded me," but that is not correct. He acknowledges himself deceived, or enticed. He is troubled with doubt. He speaks of his great trials. He is a laughing stock—he is a reproach and a derision all the day. He tried to stop mentioning Him and not to speak any more in His name; he tried to turn back upon his commission. But then the fire burned within him; his conscience became as a burning fire. He had heard defaming; his best friends had said "We will denounce him." They thought of taking revenge on him.

But suddenly faith is victorious. He must have remembered the words of the Lord in connection with his commission, "For I am with thee saith the Lord, to deliver thee" (chapter i). And so he cries out, "The Lord is with me." He prays to see His vengeance on his enemies, for unto Him he had revealed His cause. And then the singing! "Sing unto the Lord, praise ye the Lord; for He has delivered the soul of the needy from the hand of the evil-doers." Such is the experience of the godly remnant in fears and doubts, troubled on all sides, fleeing to Jehovah, till the singing times come, when He appears for their deliverance and the Hallelujahs will sweep the earth and the heavens.

But his grief overwhelms him. Perhaps he thought again of all the sneers and mockeries, of all the harsh words, the unfaithful friends and the physical pain he endured. He is occupied with himself and the soul struggle begins anew and culminates in a near collapse. He curses, as Job did, the day in which he was born.

THE PROPHETIC WARNING.

CHAPTER XXI.

1. Zedekiah's Inquiry. 1-2.
2. Jehovah's Answer through Jeremiah. 3-18.

1. Zedekiah's Inquiry: Verses 1–2. It has been said that this chapter is historically misplaced and therefore must be considered an evidence of the composite authorship of this book. The Spirit of God for some reason unknown to us has put it in this place. Zedekiah sent unto Jeremiah Pashur (a different one from the Pashur in the preceding chapter) to inquire as to Nebuchadrezzar, the king of Babylon. This is of course Nebuchadnezzar. The form of his name found in Jeremiah is derived more correctly from the Babylonian, which is "Nabukudurri-usur." Here the great king is mentioned for the first time in Jeremiah. The wicked Zedekiah may have remembered God's dealing with Hezekiah when the Lord annihilated the army of Sennacherib, the Assyrian. Then Zedekiah said: "Peradventure the Lord will deal with us according to all His wondrous works, that he may go up from us."

2. Jehovah's Answer Through Jeremiah: Verses 3–18. Zedekiah (whose name was Mattaniah), the ungodly king, who had been made king by Nebuchadrezzar after he had carried away captives from Jerusalem, heard a message of judgment from Jeremiah. The Babylonian King's army was again before the city, because Zedekiah had revolted and broken his agreement with the king. How could Zedekiah even imagine that a righteous Lord had a message of peace for him? The Lord Himself will now fight against Jerusalem and its wicked king. The enemy will do the appointed judgment work; "he shall smite them with the edge of the sword; he shall not spare them, neither have pity, nor have mercy." The king is to be taken captive. Then he addresses the people and the house of David in no uncertain words, which need no further comment.

CONCERNING THE KINGS OF JUDAH. Chapter XXII-XXIII:8.

CHAPTER XXII.

1. The Message in the House of the King of Judah. 1-9.
2. Touching Shallum, the King of Judah. 11-12.
3. Concerning Jehoiakim and his Fate. 13-19.
4. Concerning Coniah and his Fate. 20-30.

1. The Message in the House of the King of Judah: Verses 1–10. What a figure Jeremiah was as he stood, obedient to the Divine command, before the royal palace to deliver his God-given message! The door of mercy still is open. Let them execute judgment, let them stop oppressing the stranger, the widows and orphans, let them shed no longer innocent blood, then the house of David shall prosper. If not, the house shall become a desolation. The nations astonished at the destruction and overthrow of the city will hear the answer that it is "because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord their God and worshipped other gods and served them."

2. Touching Shallum the King of Judah: Verses 11–12. He is also called Jehoahaz (1 Chron. iii:15; 2 Kings xxiii:30, 32). He was carried away by Pharaoh-Necho into Egypt; he will return.

3. Concerning Jehoiakim and His Fate: Verses 13–19. This wicked king and his evil doings are described in these verses. He was a cruel despot, who built his palaces by forced labor; covetousness, shedding of innocent blood, oppression and violence characterized his reign. Then his ignominous burial, the burial of an ass, is predicted. It means that an ass has no burial and so Jehoiakim would have no burial; he is the only king of Judah whose burial is not recorded. It may be possible that Jeremiah added these words by Divine command, after this king had cut the roll to pieces and burned it in the fire (Jer. xxxvi). The prophet wrote the same words contained in the roll (all these chapters beginning with chapter ii constitute the roll the king burned), and many others were added. Most likely because he had done that wicked work in cutting the Word of God

to pieces and casting it into the fire, this special shameful end was announced. Beware you cutters of the Bible, you mutilators of the Word of God, your end, too, will be an ignominious end!

4. Concerning Coniah and His Fate: Verses 20–30. Coniah, also called Jehoiachin, Joiakim and Joachim, after a brief reign of a few months had been carried away to Babylon to die there. Then the prophet's voice breaks in with a mighty appeal, "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord." Every true believer feels like shouting these words in the present days of departure from God and rejection of His Word. Then there is a prediction as to Jeconiah, "Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days; for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David and ruling any more in Judah." A curse was thus pronounced upon the house of David in the line of Solomon. But there was still the line of Nathan the son of David. Messiah, the son of David, could therefore not spring from the line of Solomon; he must come from the line of Nathan. Joseph, the husband of the Virgin Mary of Nazareth was a son of David through the line of Solomon, the disinherited line; but Mary of Nazareth was a daughter of David through the line of Nathan.

CHAPTER XXIII:1-8.

1. The False Shepherds. 1-4.
2. The True Shepherd. 5-8.

1. The False Shepherds: Verses 1–4. The word pastors means shepherds. Ezekiel received a larger message about these false shepherds, the hirelings who did not feed the flock. (Ezek. xxxiv. See annotations of this chapter.) The scattered remnant of the Lord's flock (not the church, but the remnant of Israel) will yet be gathered out of all countries, be fruitful and increase, no longer fearful, dismayed or in want. It is a prophecy concerning the time when the Shepherd of Israel, their King as well, is manifested.

2. The True Shepherd: Verses 5–8. A great Messianic prophecy follows. "The righteous Branch," the Son of David, whose name is "The Lord our Righteousness" (Jehovah Zidkenu) is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the King who will reign and prosper, executing judgment and justice in the earth. The prophecy is unfulfilled. He came as the Son of David, the promised King. He offered that kingdom to Israel; they rejected Him. But He is coming again, and in that day of glory this great prediction will be accomplished. His people Israel will be saved (Rom. xi:25–27). Their wonderful restoration from the North and from all the countries will then take place.

CONDEMNATION OF THE FALSE PROPHETS. THE TWO BASKETS OF FIGS. Chapters XXIII:9-XXIV.

CHAPTER XXIII:9-40.

1. Jeremiah's Lament on Account of the False Prophets. 9-14.
2. The Condemnation of these Prophets. 15-32.
3. Forgotten and Forsaken. 33-40.

1. Jeremiah's Lament on Account of the False Prophets: Verses 9–14. The Prophet is overwhelmed because of the wicked prophets, because in the Lord's house wickedness was found. The false prophets of Samaria had led the people into idolatry and the prophets of Judah were guilty of all kinds of immoralities. Like priests, like people; they all became unto the Lord as Sodom, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem like Gomorrah.

2. The Condemnation of the Prophets: Verses 15–32. They will be fed with wormwood and will have to drink gall. On account of their false message of peace (verses 17, 18), the whirlwind of divine judgment will fall upon them and upon the head of the wicked. They prophesied lies in the name of Jehovah; they were prophets of the deceit of their own heart. They tried to make the people forget the Name of Jehovah. Such is today still the work of apostate teachers, who speak out of the deceit of their hearts, who prophesy lies and who aim at the Name which is above every Name.

How different is the Word of the Lord, from the idle dreams of these false prophets. "Is not My Word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (verse 29). Three times the Lord declares He is against these prophets (verses 30–32).

3. Forgotten and Forsaken: Verses 33–40. If they ask the question, "What is the burden of the Lord?" the answer is to be, "I will cast you off." The burden, or word of the Lord is not to be mentioned again to them. They will be utterly forgotten and forsaken, with everlasting reproach and perpetual shame upon them.

CHAPTER XXIV.

1. The Vision of the Two Baskets of Figs. 1-3.
2. The Vision Interpreted. 4-10.

1. The vision of the Two Baskets of Figs: Verses 1–3. Jeconiah, with the choicest of the nation, had been carried away into captivity. A large portion remained, and were not taken away, and these attributed their escape from exile to some goodness in them. At that time the prophet had a vision. He saw set before the temple two baskets of figs. The one basket was filled with good figs, the second basket with bad figs.

2. The Vision Interpreted: Verses 4–10. The good figs are symbolical of those who were carried away into captivity. They were sent away for their good. He promises them good things. They are going to return; He is going to build them; He will plant them. More than that, He will give them a heart to know that He is the Lord. For they shall return unto Me with their whole heart. They are never to be plucked up. This prophecy evidently goes beyond the return of the small remnant from Babylon, yet partially at least it was fulfilled. The bad figs are those who remained with Zedekiah in Jerusalem, but they also should be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth, "to be a reproach, a proverb, a taunt and a curse."

THE SEVENTY YEARS' CAPTIVITY AND THE JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS.

CHAPTER XXV.

1. The Retrospect. 1-7.
2. The Seventy Year Captivity Announced. 8-11.
3. The Punishment of Babylon and its King. 12-14.
4. The Wine-Cup of Fury for the Nations. 15-29.
5. The Day of the Lord and Wrath of God. 30-38.

1. The Retrospect: Verses 1–7. The prophet in the fourth year of Jehoiakim addresses the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The fourth year of Jehoiakim was also the first year of Nebuchadrezzar. In this eventful year the battle of Carchemish was fought and Nebuchadrezzar defeated Egypt. The supremacy of Babylon had been insured. At this critical time the prophet gives a restrospect of his ministry among them. From the thirteenth year of Josiah he had spoken to them, but they had not heard. The Lord sent other servants, too, but they did not hear. He puts before them their stubbornness and how they provoked the Lord to anger.

2. The Seventy Years Captivity Announced: Verses 8–11. And now the solemn verdict is announced. The Northern power is coming against this land, headed by King Nebuchadrezzar, who is here called for the first time by the Lord, "My servant." All mirth and joy will be taken from them; the whole land shall be a desolation, and they shall serve the king of Babylon for seventy years.

3. The Punishment of Babylon and its King: Verses 12–14. When the seventy years are ended the Babylonian nation and its king (Belshazar) would be punished for their iniquity. All that is written in this book of Jeremiah, concerning Babylon is to be accomplished (including the final desolation). Daniel in Babylon, when he read the Book of Jeremiah, dwelt perhaps on this passage, and turned to the Lord in that remarkable prayer recorded in the ninth chapter of the book which bears his name.

4. The Wine-cup of Fury for the Nations: Verses 15–29.

While the Lord thus judged Jerusalem, should the other nations go unpunished? And He answers, "Ye shall not be unpunished, for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the Lord of hosts" (verse 29). This prophecy is most remarkable. It predicts a world war. All nations shall drink and be moved and be mad because of the sword. It includes all the kingdoms of the world which are upon the face of the earth (verse 26). Have we not seen something like this during the past, most horrible war of history? And may this not be the prelude to the day of the Lord, when these nations will have to face the Judge and judgment?

5. The Day of the Lord and the Wrath of God: Verses 30–38. The *Yom Jehovah*, the day of the Lord, is now announced by the prophet. It is that great future day ushered in by the visible and glorious manifestation of the Lord. All the prophets speak of that day as the day of consummation and glory. It is equally prominent in the New Testament (Matt. xxiv:30; 2 Thess. i:7–10; 2 Peter iii:7–10; Rev. xix:11–21, etc.). Jeremiah beholds Him coming from above, with a shout, not the shout with which He calls His own together (1 Thess. iv:17), but the shout of judging wrath. He will plead with all flesh. The slain of the Lord shall be many. The howling of the shepherds, the false leaders, because their end is come, concludes this great vision.

THREATENED WITH DEATH AND HIS DELIVERANCE.

CHAPTER XXVI.

1. The Temple like Shiloh; Jerusalem to be a Curse. 1-7.
2. Threatened with Death. 8-11.
3. Jeremiah's Defense. 12-15.
4. History Remembered; the Prophet's Deliverance. 16-24.

1. The Temple Like Shiloh; Jerusalem to be a Curse: Verses 1–7. We are now taken back to the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim. (Compare with chapter vii). The

Lord still waits in patience for their repentance. With holy boldness the prophet stands in a place where the worshippers pass to enter the temple and announces the message. The temple is to be like Shiloh, that is forsaken (Psa. lxxviii:60). Jerusalem is to be a curse.

2. Threatened with Death: Verses 8–11. Then he was arrested for his faithfulness and threatened with death, "Thou shalt surely die." The priests and the prophets were his accusers before the princes. How often this has been repeated in the history of God's true witnesses! During pagan Rome as well as papal Rome, the false priests and false prophets hated and despised God's witnesses and persecuted them. It is so in our times.

3. Jeremiah's Defense: Verses 12–15. He makes his defense in a few dignified words. He tells them he is Jehovah's messenger. He tells them that he is in their hands, but warns them if they kill him they shed innocent blood. This courage was born of faith. He knows that he is in His hands.

4. History Remembered; the Prophet's Deliverance: Verses 16–24. The princes and people were deeply impressed and declared that he was not worthy of death. This encouraged certain elders to speak, in whose heart some fear seems to have been left. They remembered the prophet Micah, the contemporary of Isaiah, who spoke similar words in the days of Hezekiah (Micah iii:12). Hezekiah did not have Micah killed. They warned against so rash a deed. They also mentioned the case of the prophet Urijah, who had also prophesied, as Jeremiah did. He had fled to Egypt, but was brought back; then Jehoiakim killed him. We do not know why his case is mentioned in this connection, unless it is to show the difference between good Hezekiah and wicked Jehoiakim. Then Ahikam, the father of Gedaliah, who was governor under Nebuchadnezzar, stood by him, and he was delivered.

THE OPTIMISM OF THE FALSE PROPHETS CONTRADICTED AND REBUKED. Chapters XXVII-XXVIII.

CHAPTER XXVII.

1. The Call of Nebuchadnezzar to be the Servant of God. 1-11.
2. The Call to Submit and to Serve the King of Babylon. 12-22

1. The Call of Nebuchadnezzar as the Servant of God: Verses 1–11. It was in the earlier part of the reign of Zedekiah (Jehoiakim in verse 1 is a clerical error, see verse 3 and 12) that Jeremiah is commanded to make bonds and yokes to put them on his neck; then he was to send them to the surrounding nations by the ambassadors at the court of Zedekiah. The verses which follow are of much importance and interest. God speaks as creator, and in His sovereignty He appoints Nebuchadnezzar as head over the nations and over the beasts of the field also over the fowls of heaven (see Dan. ii:38), not permanently, but for a time. God appointed a new form of government, because Jerusalem had failed, and the theocratic government as vested in the house of David was to pass away. An imperial head is chosen by the Lord from among the Gentiles. He constitutes Nebuchadnezzar His servant; with him and his rule begin the times of the Gentiles. He is the golden head in the dream-image he saw, which young Daniel interpreted by Divine revelation. The times of the Gentiles are fully revealed in Daniel's great prophecies. The predicted end of these times are not passed into history; we are still living in the times of the Gentiles. They end with the second, visible coming of Christ, when Gentile world-dominion, as it started with Nebuchadnezzar, will end, and the kingdom of heaven begins.*

*"This fact—that God has committed power in this world to a man is very remarkable. In the case of Israel, man had been tried on the ground of obedience to God, and had not been able to possess the blessing that should have resulted from it. Now God abandons this direct government of the world (while still the sovereign Lord above); and, casting off Israel whom He had chosen out from the nations, grouping the latter around the elect people and His own throne in latter around the elect people and His own throne in Israel, He subjects

Whoever refuses now the new governmental order will be punished by the Lord; the nations that put their neck under the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar, to serve him, will remain in their land.

2. **The Call to Submit and to Serve the King of Babylon: Verses 12–22.** He speaks to the king and to the priests and calls them to submit to the new government established with Nebuchadnezzar. He urges them not to believe the lying prophets with their false, optimistic message, who promised smooth things. Every message they uttered, contradicted the Word of God. It is the same in Christendom today. The rationalistic critics have a message of unscriptural optimism concerning the conditions of this age, which contradicts everything made known in the prophetic Word. Part of the vessels from the temple had been carried away. The false prophets said that these vessels would shortly be returned. The Lord dispels this lying message, for He reveals through His prophet that the remaining vessels shall also be taken to Babylon.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

1. Hananiah, the False Prophet. 1-11.
2. The Judgment of Hananiah. 12-17.

I. Hananiah, the False Prophet: Verses 1–11. One of these lying prophets became very bold, and declared that he had a message from the Lord that the yoke of the Babylonian king was to be broken, and that within two years the temple vessels would be brought back. Jeremiah said "Amen"—let it be so! But he knew it could not be so, for the Lord had spoken to him; he gives a test. Then Hananiah became still more arrogant. Jeremiah had about his neck the yoke (chapter xxvii:1). Hananiah took it off and broke it and declared again that within two years the yoke

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the world to one head, and committing power unto man, He places him under a new trial, to prove whether he will own the God who gave him power, and make those happy who are subjected to him, when he can do whatever he will in this world."

of Nechuchadnezzar should be broken. What applause he must have earned from the unbelieving masses about him!

2. The Judgment of Hananiah: Verses 12–17. Instead of yokes of wood there should be yokes of iron, the prophet tells Hananiah. He exposes him as a deceiver whom the Lord had not sent, and announces his fate, that he should die this same year. He died in the seventh month of the same year.

JEREMIAH'S LETTER TO THE EXILES.

CHAPTER XXIX.

1. Jeremiah's Letter. 1-23.
2. Concerning Shemaiah and his False Prophecies. 24-23.

1. Jeremiah's Letter: Verses 1–23. King Zedekiah sent Elasah and Gemariah on a diplomatic mission to King Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah used the occasion to send a letter by them to the exiles. The letter first of all makes it clear that their stay in Babylon will not be transitory. They are to settle down, build homes, marry, rear families, take wives for their sons and husbands for their daughters. They were to seek the peace of Babylon, for Babylon's peace would mean their own peace. The latter injunction has often been forgotten by the Jews during the past 1900 years, since their great dispersion; often have they fomented strife among the nations where they are strangers.

The false prophets had predicted a speedy return. Some of these false prophets had gone with them to Babylon and were present in the prison camp on the banks of the river Chebar. We read in Ezekiel xi:3 that they ridiculed the Divine command and gave wicked council. They felt themselves secure. Ezekiel continued the message of Jeremiah. (See annotations in Ezekiel.) Once more the seventy years are mentioned and what is to take place after they have expired. "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not evil, to give you an expected end." He promises an answer to their

cry, and if they seek Him, He will be found. How gracious and merciful He is towards His own! In His own time all His gracious purposes will be fully accomplished in that nation, as they were partially accomplished in the return of a remnant after the exile. Verse 14 speaks of the larger return "gathered out from all the nations." But those who persistently continued in disobedience, who listened to the false prophets will suffer the predicted fate; for such there will be no deliverance. Two of the false prophets are mentioned by name, Ahab and Zedekiah (not the king). Besides being false prophets, they were adulterers and whoremongers. King Nebuchadnezzar roasted them in the fire (22–23).

2. Concerning Shemiah and His false Prophecies: Verses 24–32. Shemaiah, a Nehelamite, which means "the dreamer," was also in Babylon, and when the captives received the letter from Jeremiah, he answered the letter. The letter was received by a certain Zephaniah, of whom he inquired, "Why hast thou not reproved Jeremiah of Anathoth, which maketh himself a prophet to you?" When Zephaniah received this letter he read it to Jeremiah. The Lord exposes the Nehelamite as a deceiver, and his judgment is announced.

THE GLORIOUS FUTURE OF THE NATION. Chapter XXX-XXXI

CHAPTER XXX.

1. The Time of Jacob's Trouble. 1-11.
2. Zion's Desperate Condition and the Promise of Deliverance. 12-17.
3. Restoration and Glory. 18-24.

1. The Time of Jacob's Trouble: Verses 1–11. The critics have made havoc with this great prophecy. De Wette, Hitzig, and other rationalists, claim to have discovered that this chapter, and those which follow, are the work of the spurious "second Isaiah." These critics, with their present day echoes in different colleges, reject these chapters

as not being Jeremianic. They are totally wrong. This great prophecy, which begins with the thirtieth chapter, is quite in order after all these judgment messages, announcing the doom of Jerusalem and of the nation. What then about the future, that future which all their fathers had cherished, the promises which rested upon the covenant Jehovah made with David? Was now everything to be plotted out and no national hope left? The last siege of Jerusalem was in progress; soon all the threatened judgments would pass fully into history. How perfectly in order is it that now should be given a message of the glorious future of the nation.

Jeremiah is commanded to write in a book all the words Jehovah had spoken; quite sufficient evidence that Jeremiah is the author and that this book is not a patchwork of different supplementers, redactors and compilers.

The first promise in verse three is concerning the coming days in which the people Israel and Judah will return to their God-given land to possess it. Has this promise been fulfilled? Expositors generally say that it was fulfilled in the return from the captivity. But this is not so. Here is a promised return not only of the house of Judah, but a return of the ten tribes also. This has never taken place. In spite of the "British-Israel" hallucination, every sane Bible reader realizes that the house of Israel is still scattered among the nations. This restoration promise will be accomplished in the future Then we hear what will precede that restoration. It will be a time of great trouble, even the time of Jacob's trouble (Matt. xxiv; Mark xiii), the great tribulation revealed in other portions of the prophetic Word, notably in Daniel and Revelation. When that time comes "Jacob will be saved out of it." The yoke of the last Gentile world-power (the revived Roman Empire, the ten-horned Beast of Dan. vii and Rev. xiii) will then be broken (verse 8) and they will serve the true David, David's Lord and David's Son, our Lord (verse 9). Then follows the message of comfort. How well history has confirmed this one sentence of verse 11: "Though I make a full end of

all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee."

2. Zion's desperate Condition and the Promise of Deliverance: Verses 12–17. Here is a reminder of Zion's desperate condition and shameful history and how He had to chastise His people and wound them with the wound of an enemy. Such is still their lot and will be down to the end of this age, a people scattered and afflicted, devoured and spoiled by the nations. But when the time comes, the time of mercy for Zion, her enemies will be dealt with. In arrogant unbelief, these nations, so called "Christian nations," said "Zion is an Outcast"—"whom no man seeketh after" (verse 17); but the Lord says, "I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds."

3. Restoration and Glory: Verses 18–24. The City then will be built again. The voices of praise and joy will be heard once more. He will glorify and increase them. He will be their God and they shall be His people. The whirlwind will strike "the head of the wicked," the wicked false king, the false Messiah, Antichrist. The next chapter is the continuation of this great prophecy.

CHAPTER XXXI.

1. The Home-going of the Nation. 1-9.
2. The Joy of Salvation. 10-14.
3. The Preceding Tribulation, Sorrow and Repentance. 15-21.
4. Assurance. 22-26.
5. The New Covenant. 27-34.
6. The Everlasting Nation. 35-40.

1. The Home-going of the Nation: Verses 1–9. Sovereign grace will bring them back and give them the songs of salvation. It is true of Israel "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee"; it is equally true of us. What day of joy it will be when they go back home once more, never to leave the old homeland again! Then the watchmen on mount Ephraim cry, "Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the

Lord our God." Can there be anything more touching and beautiful than verses 8–9?

2. The Joy of Salvation: Verses 10–14. The nations are addressed. Oh! that the great nations of today might have an ear to hear this message, "He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd does his flock." His promises made to Israel will not fail. The nations should understand, as they do not, that Israel will yet become the head of all the nations of the earth. What singing that will be in that day of which the prophet speaks (verse 12). What rejoicing after their sorrow! What fullness will be theirs!

3. The Preceding Tribulation, Sorrow and Repentance: Verses 15–21. Rachel weeping for her children (verse 15) is quoted in Matthew ii in connection with the killing of the boys in Bethlehem. It has also a future fulfillment, when once more Satan will manifest his power as the murderer during the tribulation. But the promise, "They shall come again from the land of the enemy" and "Thy children shall come again to their own border," clearly shows that captivity is likewise meant from which Rachel's children (Joseph and Benjamin, i.e., Ephraim) shall return after the final tribulation and weeping. Physical resurrection is not in view here. Therefore, the next verse speaks of Ephraim moaning and in repentance. Then God's gracious answer "Is Ephraim my dear son?—I will surely have mercy upon him."

4. Assurance. Verses 22-26. Backsliding Israel is exhorted and the assurance is given, "A woman shall compass a man." It refers to Israel as the woman, the timid, weak, forsaken one, who now will compass a man: that is have power given unto her to become the ruler. (Some have translated this difficult passage, "The woman shall be turned into a man"). Then follows the promise of assurance.

5. The New Covenant. Verses 27-34. In the preceeding verse we read that Jeremiah awoke, so that this message

must have come to him in a vision by night, and sweet was his sleep. How refreshing must have been to his troubled soul this wonderful prophecy! The great prediction in these verses is the one concerning the New Covenant. This covenant is not made with Gentiles, nor even with the church as so often erroneously stated. It is the new covenant to be made with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. This is fully confirmed in the Epistle to Hebrews (Hebrews viii:8-13). The old covenant is the law-covenant, which the Lord did not make with Gentiles, but with Israel exclusively. The new covenant is of grace. The ground of this new covenant is the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ, His blood, as we learn from His own words when He instituted the supper. He died for that nation, and therefore all Israel will yet receive the promised blessing of this new covenant. This prophecy is therefore still unfulfilled, for Israel does not enjoy this new covenant now. In the meantime, while Israel has not yet the blessings of this new covenant, Gentiles, who by nature are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and *strangers from the covenants of promise*, believing in Christ, possess the blessings of this new covenant to the full. In that coming day of Israel's return, the nation, Israel and Judah, will be born again, know the Lord, and their sins will be remembered no more.

6. The Everlasting Nation. Verses 35-40. This Word of Jehovah is a complete answer to those in Christendom who think that God has cast away Israel, that they are no longer the chosen people. The Lord makes a condition, "If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all they have done saith the Lord." Neither has heaven been measured, neither has the depth of the earth been searched out, nor will this ever be accomplished. What a faithful covenant keeping God He is! Verses 38-40 have never been fulfilled in the past.

JEREMIAH IN PRISON. NEW MESSAGE OF RESTORATION AND BLESSING. Chapters XXXII-XXXIII.

CHAPTER XXXII.

1. Shut up in the Court of the Prison. 1-5.
2. The Revelation of the Lord Concerning Hanameel. 6-15.
3. The Prophet's Prayer. 16-25.
4. Jehovah's Answer. 26-44.

1. Shut up in the Court of the Prison. Verses 1-5. The siege of Jerusalem began in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign. It was in the tenth year, a year later (xxxix:1) that we find Jeremiah in prison. In order to understand this imprisonment chapter, xxxvii 11-21 must be consulted. He was first thrown as a prisoner into the house of Jonathan the scribe. It was a dungeon, perhaps some underground place. He was consigned there. It was a horrible place, for Jeremiah was afraid he might die there (xxxvii:20). Zedekiah seems to have been somewhat favorably inclined towards him. He asked him secretly to his palace and after Jeremiah told the king, in answer to his question about a word from the Lord, that the king should be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon, Zedekiah on his request released him from the dungeon and put him into the court of the prison, and was kept by the king's order from starvation (xxxvii:21). Here, in our chapter, is the full text of his faithful message; had it been less faithful he might have been released.

2. The Revelation of the Lord concerning Hanameel. Verses 6-15. The coming of his cousin with the request to buy his field in Anathoth is divinely announced. The right of redemption was Jeremiah's. (See Leviticus xxv:25.) Hanameel came, and Jeremiah, realizing that it was of the Lord, bought the field, paying for it seventeen shekels of silver. The sale was legally transacted and executed; there being two rolls, one sealed, the other open. It was all delivered to Baruch, the faithful secretary of the prophet, mentioned here for the first time. He was instructed to put all in an earthen vessel. By his action the prophet proved his simple faith in the promised return.

3. The Prophet's Prayer: Verses 16–25. What a beautiful prayer it is which came from the lips of the prisoner! He acknowledges first of all, as we all do in believing prayer the power of God, that there is nothing too hard for the Lord. Then he speaks of the loving kindness and righteousness of the God of Israel, and mentions the past history of the nation. What the Lord had predicted against the city and the nation had been done; the city was given to the Chaldeans. "What Thou hast spoken is come to pass; and behold Thou seest it." He then mentions the fact that the Lord had told him to buy that field. Then the prayer is interrupted, like Daniel's prayer.

4. Jehovah's Answer: Verses 26–44. The answer the Lord gave to praying Jeremiah is twofold. Jeremiah had said in faith, "There is nothing too hard for the Lord." The Lord answered him, "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is there anything too hard for Me?" Then He announces first of all the fate of the doomed city (verses 28–35). After this comes once more the message of comfort and peace looking forward to that blessed future when Israel is gathered out of all countries, brought back to the land—when they shall be His people (verses 36–44).

CHAPTER XXXIII.

1. The Call to Pray and Jerusalem's Overthrow. 1-5.
2. Future Blessing and Glory. 6-14.
3. The Branch of Righteousness; Jerusalem's new Name. 15-18.
4. Jehovah's Faithfulness. 19-26.

1. The Call to Pray and Jerusalem's Overthrow: Verses 1–5. Jeremiah is still in prison, as we learn from the first verse. The siege of Jerusalem is on. Then the Lord said, "Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." What an offer and what an assurance! Then the Lord speaks of the great and mighty things, announcing first the overthrow of Jerusalem. The demolished houses of Jerusalem are coming to be used in the defence to serve against the mounds

and the sword. There will be great slaughter. (The Hebrew text of verses 4 and 5 has many difficulties).

2. Future Blessings and Glory: Verses 6–14. The next great and mighty things revealed are the future blessings and glory. Health and cure, abundance of peace and truth, a complete return from the captivity of both Judah and Israel, cleansing from all their iniquity, complete forgiveness, all are promised; and let it be remembered none of these promises has been realized. Verses 9–13 also concern the future restoration of the land and the city. What a day is yet to come when "the voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say, Praise the Lord of Hosts" is heard, when Zion sings her beautiful redemption songs. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and the house of Judah." The delay may be long and still deferred according to His eternal purposes; but at the appointed time these days will surely come.

3. The Branch of Righteousness: Jerusalem's New Name: Verses 15–18. "In those days" in the coming days, the days of blessing and glory, when Christ comes the second time, He, the Branch of Righteousness will occupy the throne of His father David. (See Luke i:32.) Then salvation for His people will have come, and the city will receive a new name, the name of Him whose glory covers it, "the Lord our Righteousness." Likewise will the Temple worship be restored. (See annotations on Ezekiel's millennial temple.)

4. Jehovah's Faithfulness: Verses 19–26. This is similar to xxxi:35, etc. His gifts and calling are without repentance. The Davidic Covenant stands. He does not cast away His people.

JEREMIAH WARNS ZEDEKIAH.

CHAPTER XXXIV:1-7.

The besieging army was before the walls of Jerusalem when the prophet is commanded to go to the king and tell

him that the city will soon be burned. He announced also Zedekiah's fate. He could not escape, but would be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon. He would see Nebuchadnezzar eye to eye, speak with him mouth to mouth, and then be taken to Babylon. Ezekiel said, "He should not see Babylon" (Ezek. xii:13). Both statements are true. He saw the king as a prisoner at Riblah and there his eyes were put out (2 Kings xxv:6, 7), and then he was taken away to Babylon. Yet he was not to die by the sword, but in peace. And Jeremiah discharged faithfully his message.

THE MESSAGE OF CONDEMNATION.

CHAPTER XXXIV:8-22.

The king had made a covenant that all Hebrew slaves should be released (Exod. xxi:1–6; Deut. xv:12–18). The princes and people agreed, but afterwards broke the covenant. The message of condemnation tells them, since they had done this, that the Lord will set them free to fall a prey to the sword, the pestilence and famine. The text explains itself.

THE FAITHFUL RECHABITES AND THE UNFAITHFUL JEWS.

CHAPTER XXXV.

1. The Command Concerning the Rechabites. 1-11.
2. The Lesson for the Jews. 12-19.

The Rechabites were Kenites and were numbered with the children of Israel (1 Chron. ii:55). During the reign of Jehoiakim the incident of this chapter happened. The critics may rave against the "unchronological" construction of Jeremiah jumping from one period into another, but here we see the guiding hand of the Spirit in the arrangement of these events. It is perfectly in order that this should come next to the chapter which relates the broken covenant. A careful reading and study of this chapter will bring out the lesson of their faithfulness to their father's command, and the unfaithfulness of the Jews to God's command.

THE INDESTRUCTIBILITY OF THE WORD OF GOD.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

1. The Writing of the Roll. 1-4.
2. The Reading of the Roll. 4-20.
3. The King Cuts and Burns the Roll. 21-26.
4. The Indestructibility of the Word of God. 27-32.

1. The Writing of the Roll: Verses 1–4. Once more we are taken back to the fourth year of Jehoiakim. Jeremiah is now commanded to commit all the words Jehovah had spoken to him to writing. It was for the purpose that the people might hear of all the evil and that they might yet consider it and turn to the Lord to be forgiven. How gracious and merciful He is! He then dictated all the words to Baruch, who wrote them down. But asks a critic, how could he remember all he had spoken? The same Spirit who communicated the messages to him, re-communicated them to the prophet.

2. The Reading of the Roll: Verses 4–20. Jeremiah was "shut in," which, however, does not mean that he was a prisoner (see verse 19); it probably means that he was not permitted to enter the Lord's house on account of some ceremonial impurity. So he sent Baruch, his amanuensis, to read the scroll to the people on the fasting day, and when all the people had come together Baruch read the roll at the entry of the new gate. Michaiah, one of the sons of Gemariah, was deeply moved by what he had heard, went to the place where the princes sat in counsel and told them what he had heard from Baruch's lips. Baruch was then commanded to appear before the princes to read the roll to them. What they heard frightened them. They declared they would tell the king.

3. The King Cuts and Burns the Roll: Verses 21–26. The king sent for the roll. The king listened to but a few of the leaves. Then, energized by the devil, he pulled out his penknife, cut the roll, and, to make sure that the roll would be destroyed, he cast it into the open fire, and with keen satisfaction he watched till the roll was consumed.

Elnathan, Delaiah and Gemariah, tried to keep him from doing this evil deed, but he refused to listen to them. These three had at least some reverence for the Word of God, and therefore the Holy Spirit records their names. The king was not satisfied with this. His satanic anger was so aroused that he wanted to have Baruch and Jeremiah apprehended. Like the mad king Saul, he probably thought of killing them both. But the Lord hid them.

What Jehoiakim did, has been done over and over again. It is being done today as never before in the history of Christendom. It is being done by the destructive critics, in colleges and universities; it is done by the men who have produced the *Shorter New Testament* and the *Shorter Old Testament*, by those who advocate an abridged Bible, by others who, like the English writer Wells, want a new Bible. The same power of darkness is behind all these wicked attempts to mutilate the Word of God. Jehoiakim's work is nothing in comparison with these Twentieth Century infidels, because these aim at the most precious, the most blessed revelation of God, the doctrine of Christ. Their condemnation will be far greater than that of the Jewish King.

4. Indestructibility of the Word of God: Verses 27–32. But did the King destroy the Word of God? One might just as well speak of destroying God Himself. Neither God nor His Word can ever be affected by the efforts of men inspired by the enemy of the Truth of God. The Word of God endureth forever. It is, like God, eternal. How the Bibles have been burned a thousand times over again! In pagan Rome and papal Rome Satan has raged against the Bible. His Word lives on. And now the devil, camouflaged as an angel of light, in the guise of "devout scholarship" and "reverent criticism" tries it again. His Word lives on! Emperors and popes, philosophers and infidels who attacked the Bible are gone; the Bible is still with us. Jeremiah is told to take another roll. Once more the Lord dictates the same words to him, and Jeremiah again dictates them to

Baruch, "with many like words," including a judgment message of the miserable end of the wicked king.

JEREMIAH AND ZEDEKIAH. THE FALL OF JERUSALEM.

Chapters XXXVII-XXXIX.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

1. Jeremiah's Warning. 1-10.
2. Jeremiah's Arrest. 11-21.

1. Jeremiah's Warning: Verses 1–10. To understand more fully these chapters it must be remembered that the besieging army before the gates of Jerusalem was temporarily withdrawn, because an Egyptian army had appeared against it. This was no doubt an occasion for the false prophets to preach their false hope, so that the people were deceived. Once more Zedekiah sent to the prophet a deputation (see chapter xxi:1) after Nebuchadnezzar had made him king. The occasion was on account of the withdrawal of the Chaldean army (verse 5). They thought that it was surely a good sign and expected a favorable message. The false hope with which they were deceiving themselves was swept away by the Word of Jehovah as it came to the prophet (verses 7–10). There was no hope and after Zedekiah had rebelled (see our annotations on 2 Kings), the king of Babylon came and burnt the city with fire.

2. Jeremiah's Arrest: Verses 11–21. When the Chaldean army had left, Jeremiah went forth to go to his hometown Anathoth, for what is not revealed. He may have gone to claim his portion which belonged to him as priest. When, in the gate of Benjamin a captain arrested him, charging the prophet with desertion, he denied the charge. Such a charge could easily be made on account of Jeremiah's former exhortation to submit to the Chaldeans. He is put in prison in the house of Jonathan the scribe; but later the dungeon is changed to the court of the prison. (See the annotations to chapter xxxii:2.)

We give a diagram which illustrates the chronology of the siege of Jerusalem and the fall of the city.

	I. *The Siege begun in the ninth year.*		
xxxix:1			Siege begun.
	xxxiv:10		Manumission of slaves
	II. *The Siege raised temporarily in the ninth or tenth year.*		
xxxvii:3-10=		=xxi:1-7	Jeremiah consulted by deputies from the king.
	xxxiv:8-22		Re-enthralment of slaves.
xxxvii:11-16			Jeremiah seized, and imprisoned in Jonathan' house.
	III. *The Siege renewed in the ninth or tenth year.*		
xxxvii:17-21	=xxxii:1-5 =xxxiv:1-7		Jeremiah brought in tenth year to be secretly consulted by the king: put afterwards in court of guard.
	xxxii:6-44		Field bought by Jeremiah.
	xxxiii:1-26		Further prophecy in court of guard.
xxxviii:1-3=		=xxi:8-10	Jeremiah advises people to desert to Chaldeans.
xxxviii:4-6			Jeremiah put in miry dungeon.
xxxviii:7-13			Jeremiah restored by Ebed-melech to court of guard.
xxxviii:14-28			Jeremiah consulted by king in third entry of Temple: remanded to court of guard.
	IV. *The Siege ended in the eleventh year.*		
xxxix:1-14			City taken and destroyed.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

1. Jeremiah in the Dungeon and his Rescue. 1-13.
2. Jeremiah with Zedekiah; his Last Appeal. 14-28.

1. Jeremiah in the Dungeon and His Rescue: Verses 1–13. Jeremiah is next accused of high treason. The charge is based on his message, given to him by the Lord: "He that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live." Like the conscientious objectors during the past war, they accused him of being unpatriotic. "This man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt." They demand his life. In the sixth verse we see him in a deep dungeon, into which he

was put by means of ropes. And Jeremiah sank into the vile mire. This reminds us of Him, our blessed Lord, who was also accused by false witnesses, and who went Himself into the horrible pit and the miry clay, into the deepest suffering and the jaws of death, to take us out of the dungeon, where sin has put us. The wicked princes evidently meant to leave Jeremiah in that dungeon to suffer a horrible death.

But the servant of the Lord was not in the hands of the princes, but in the hands of his Master. God chooses for the deliverer a slave, an Ethiopian, Ebed-melech (servant of the king). The heart of this Ethiopian eunuch was touched with pity. He goes to the king, who seems to have been ignorant about what had been done to Jeremiah and tells him that Jeremiah is likely to starve to death in the filthy hole where they had put him. The king commands the eunuch to act at once with thirty men to deliver Jeremiah. With what tenderness, to spare the man of God all needless pain, Ebed-melech carried out the king's wish (verse 12)!

2. Jeremiah with Zedekiah; His Last Appeal: Verses 14–28. This is a great dramatic scene. Zedekiah sends once more for Jeremiah. We suppose the filth of the dungeon was still clinging to the prophet's garments. The king wants to know something. "Hide nothing from me," he demands. He may rest assured that the prophet of holy courage hides nothing. But Jeremiah asks two questions: "Wilt thou not surely put me to death? And if I give thee counsel, wilt thou not hearken unto me?" The first question the king answers: "I will not put thee to death." The second question he leaves unanswered. His heart was hardened like Pharoah's heart.

He gives him once more the message of Jehovah: Go forth to the King of Babylon, acknowledge his authority, believe in My Word and thou shalt live and thine house; then Jerusalem will not be burned. But if not, then you cannot escape and the doom of the city is sealed. The king shrinks from such a surrender. Terrors of an imaginary kind seize hold on him. He fears the Babylonian king will deliver him

into the hands of the Jews who had deserted already, and that they would mock him and ill-treat him. Jeremiah pleads once more. It is his final appeal: "Obey, I beseech thee, the voice of the Lord." But the king refuses. The final request he made of Jeremiah but reveals his miserable character. The last interview has ended. Jeremiah remains in the prison and was there when Jerusalem was taken.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

1. The Fall of Jerusalem and the Fate of Zedekiah. 1-9.
2. Nebuchadnezzar's Kindness to Jeremiah. 10-14.
3. Ebed-melech's Reward. 15-18.

1. The Fall of Jerusalem and the Fate of Zedekiah: Verses 1–9. The Word of God comes true; the prophecy of Jeremiah is vindicated! The mighty army of Nebuchadnezzar returned to the city; for many months the siege goes on under indescribable suffering. How horrible it must have been! Then the city fell and the victors rushed in; the work of slaughter and burning began. According to Jewish tradition it was on the ninth day of the month Ab. On the same date in the year 70 of our era, the city was destroyed again and the temple burned, announced some forty years before by one greater than Jeremiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. Ever since, Jerusalem has been trodden down by the Gentiles and is so still. The prophetic Word tells us of a final great tribulation which will sweep over the land, and the restored, unbelieving nation, and once more armies will gather before the city.

Zedekiah tried to escape with his men of war, but is captured. Cruelly his boys are slaughtered in his sight—the last thing his eyes beheld, for immediately after his eyes were put out. Bound with chains he is led to Babylon. All the houses of Jerusalem go up in flames; the walls are demolished and the remnant of the people are carried away prisoners. (See the Appendix chapter lii:4–16.) The poorest are permitted to remain and were treated mercifully. God remembers the poor and they are spared. For all we know,

these poor people, who had nothing, were the godly, those who wept over the conditions and who cried to God for help. Their prayer, the prayer of the needy, was answered.

2. Nebuchadnezzar's Kindness to Jeremiah: Verses 1–14. And if the poor were remembered, the prophet was likewise treated with great kindness. The Babylonian king commanded: "Take him, and look well to him, and do him no harm; but do unto him even as he shall say unto thee." Nebuzar-adan found the great man of God in the prison. The princes had to come and take him from the prison house of humiliation. What an exaltation! He dwelt among the people. He cast his lot with the poor, who had nothing. We doubt not Nebuchadnezzar knew much of the history we have followed, that which transpired in Jerusalem during the siege. Perhaps he even knew the great messages concerning himself. But it was the Lord who made him act as he did. His loving eye was open above His servant, who had served so faithfully.

3. Ebed-melech's Reward: Verses 15–18. And now the deliverer of Jeremiah, the Ethiopian eunuch, receives his reward. This message was previously given before the city fell into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, when Jeremiah was still in prison. It is put here into this place for a very definite purpose, which once more answers the puerile charges of the critics.

It is when judgment comes that the faithful are rewarded. This is the lesson. While the ungodly fell and were carried away, the poor remained and were spared; Jeremiah is well treated, and Ebed-melech receives his reward. So will it be when the Lord comes.

III. AFTER THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

CHAPTERS XL-XLV.

THE TREACHERY IN THE LAND AND THE FLIGHT TO EGYPT.

CHAPTER XL-XLI.

1. Jeremiah's Choice. 1-6.
2. Gedaliah and Ishmael's Deed. 7-xli:3.
3. Ishmael's Further Atrocities and Retreat. xli:4-18.

1. Jeremiah's Choice: Verses 1–6. The opening paragraph of this chapter tells us of the choice which was given to Jeremiah. He was loosed from the prisoner's chains and told by the captain of the guard "If it seems good unto thee to come with me into Babylon, come and I will look well unto thee, but if it seem ill unto thee to come with me to Babylon, forbear; behold all the land is before thee, whither it seemth good and convenient for thee to go, thither go." Jeremiah decided to stay with his people in the land.

2. Gedaliah and Ishmael's Deed: Verses 7-xli:3. The history of this section is as follows: Gedaliah had been made governor by the victorious king. When the captains heard it they came to him at Mizpah and Gedaliah exhorted them to loyalty to the Chaldeans. Then Gedaliah is warned that Baalis, the king of Ammon, has sent Ishmael to assassinate him, but Gedaliah refuses to believe the report. Then Johanan declares himself ready to kill Ishmael, so that the dreadful results of the murder of the governor Gedaliah might be averted. Gedaliah thinks it is all slander and forbids it. In the seventh month Ishmael, with ten men, who are being entertained by Gedaliah, murders him and all the Jews and Chaldeans, who are present. It is a horrible story.

3. Ishmael's Further Atrocities and Retreat: Verses xli:4–18. The next day Ishmael met eighty men who came from the north; he invited them to come to Gedaliah, who was dead in his house. When they came to the place he slew them, except ten men, who offered to reveal to him hidden treasures of food. Then he carried off all the rest of the people who were left in Mizpah, to go to the land of Ammon. When Johanan and the captains heard of what Ishmael had done, they pursued him unto Gibeon, but Ishmael with eight men escaped to the Ammonites. Johanan took those whom they had rescued out of the clutches of the monster Ishmael, and, fearing the Chaldeans, purposed to go to Egypt.

CHAPTER XLII.

1. Jeremiah, the Intercessor. 1-6.
2. The Answer from Jehovah. 7-22.

1. Jeremiah, the Intercessor: Verses 1–6. The remnant, the few who were left after the terrible happenings recorded in the preceding chapter were now cast upon the Lord and besought the prophet to pray for them-:"That the Lord thy God may show us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do." They believed in Jeremiah as a man of God. He promises to do so, and when the answer comes he will not keep back anything.

2. The Answer From Jehovah: Verses 7–22. The answer came ten days later. Then the Word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah. If he had spoken of himself, sat down and thought out by himself what they were to do now he would have waited ten days. But it was not his counsel, not his opinion or advice; the Lord's answer to the Divine counsel is that they should abide in the land and that the King of Babylon would not hinder them in any way. Then the Lord would plant them and built them up. The Lord promises them mercies and salvation. But if they went down to Egypt, the Lord's anger would be upon them and judgment would overtake them.

In their hearts they had a desire to go to Egypt. He who is the searcher of hearts knew all about it. They used deceit, and now the Lord, knowing that they would not obey, announced through the prophet that they should die by the sword, the famine and the pestilence.

CHAPTER XLIII.

1. The Rebellion against Jeremiah. 1-7.
2. Jeremiah's Prediction about the Conquest of Egypt. 8-13.

1. Rebellion Against Jeremiah: Verses 1–7. No sooner had Jeremiah finished communicating the Divine answer, but the captains and the proud men denounced him. They charged him that he spoke falsely, that all he had said was

at the instigation of Baruch, that both were traitors. Then the leaders did not obey the voice of the Lord to dwell in the land; they took the remnant of Judah (verse 5 is explained by chapter xl:11–12) all the people, including Jeremiah and Baruch, to lead them down to Egypt, and finally they settled in Tahpanhes (Daphne), which was in the northeastern part, on the road out of Egypt to Palestine.

2. Jeremiah's Prediction About the Conquest of Egypt: Verses 8–13. Then Jeremiah was commanded by the Lord to take great stones and bury them at the entry of Pharaoh's house in Taphanhes, so that all the men of Judah could be witnesses of it. In 1886 the Egyptologist, Professor Petrie, excavated at Taphanhes a brick pavement before a kind of a palace, which probably was the place where Jeremiah hid the stones. The ruin was *Kasr el Bint Jehudi*, which means, "the palace of the daughter of Judah," the place evidently assigned to the daughters of Zedekiah. (See verse 6.) The word brick-kiln means a pavement of bricks. Then, after having buried the stones, he announced that Nebuchadrezzar would come and set his throne there also, that he would conquer Egypt, smite it and burn the idol temples there. Such an invasion took place about 568 B.C., when the Egyptian King Amasis was defeated. The pillars mentioned in verse 13 are obelisks, and Beth-Shemesh means "the house of the Sun." (Heliopolis or On.)

CHAPTER XLIV.

1. The Message to the Jews. 1-10.
2. Their Punishment. 11-14.
3. Worshipping the Queen of Heaven. 15-19.
4. Jehovah's Answer. 20-28.
5. The Sign: Pharaoh-Hophra's Defeat. 29-30.

1. The Message to the Jews: Verses 1–10. The message is concerning all the Jews who were now dwelling in Egypt. Besides being in Taphanhes, they were also in Noph (Memphis) and in Pathros, which was in the upper Egypt. Not long ago ancient papyri in Aramaic were discovered which

show that there was a Jewish colony in that part of Egypt. Jeremiah reminds them in his message how God had dealt with Jerusalem and Judah on account of their idolatries, though He had sent prophets to warn them. And now they were doing the same thing in Egypt." You too bring now utter ruin upon youselves and all your own."

2. Their Punishment: Verses 11–14. This announces their coming punishment. Behold I will set my face against you for evil, and to cut off all Israel. They are to be punished as Jerusalem was.

3. Worshipping the Queen of Heaven: Verses 15–19. What heart-hardness to say to the Man of God, "We will not hearken." They intended to perform their vows to worship "the Queen of Heaven." All, they said, was, it was well with us when we worshipped the Queen of Heaven in the homeland. The women seem to have been concerned mostly in this, but they did so with the knowledge and the consent of their husbands. See about the Queen of Heaven and the worship, chapter vii and the annotations there. They claimed that all the disaster which had come on them was the result of abandoning their evil practices. What defiance and wickedness, the fruit of their unbelieving hearts! Still greater is the defiance and wickedness of today, when the Cross and the Gospel of Christ are deliberately rejected.

4. Jehovah's Answer: Verses 20–28. The answer is plain enough, and they heard what their fate would be for their deliberate unbelief and disobedience. These are solemn words, and the Lord said, "They shall know whose Word shall stand, Mine or theirs." God's Word will always stand, and so will those who stand by the Word of God and put their trust in it.

5. The Sign: Pharaoh-Hophra's Defeat: Verses 29–30. He gives them a sign that such will be the case. Hophra is to be given into the hands of his enemies. This happened a few years before Nebuchadrezzar defeated Amasis, who had succeeded Hophra.

CHAPTER XLV.

This is the shortest chapter and contains a special message to Baruch, the companion and secretary of the prophet Jeremiah. It must be noticed that this did not take place in Egypt, where now the prophet and his friend sojourned, but it was in the fourth year of Jehoiakim. Baruch had just finished writing the words which Jeremiah dictated. It was no doubt a strenuous task, and when Baruch laid down his pen, the work having been finished, the Lord sent him a special message, showing that He had not forgotten the faithful scribe. He, too, was deeply exercised over the existing conditions; he shared the grief and sorrow of the prophet. But there must have been a measure of disappointment in Baruch's heart. Had he expected some special recognition? Was he seeking something for himself, expecting great things? Had he planned and was he lifted up with some high ambition? It would seem that such was the case, for He who knows the thoughts of His creatures from afar said to him: "And seeketh thou great things for thyself? Seek them not." It is the very heart of the old nature to seek great things, to be ambitious for earthly possessions and honors, to please oneself. God's people need to watch against this more than against anything else. It is the very crime of the devil, pride (1 Tim. iii:6). Every high ambition must be dethroned; the only ambition worthy of a child of God is to please Him, who lived on earth, never pleasing Himself, who made of Himself no reputation. How it ought to ring in our hearts daily: "Seeketh thou great thing? Seek them not." Seek not recognition in this poor age; wait for His day. And Baruch is assured of God's protection and care.

IV. THE PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE GENTILE NATIONS.

CHAPTERS XLVI-LI.

CONCERNING EGYPT.

CHAPTER XLVI.

1. Prophecy about Pharaoh-Necho. 1-12.
2. Nebuchadnezzar's Invasion of Egypt. 13-26.
3. A Message of Comfort. 27-28.

1. Prophecy About Pharaoh Necho: Verses 1–12. This Pharaoh made an attempt to invade the territory of the King of Babylon, but was defeated by Nebuchadrezzar in a battle on the river Euphrates at Carchemish. This prophecy was given about eighteen years before the fall of Jerusalem. All was literally fulfilled.

2. Nebuchadrezzar's Invasion of Egypt: Verses 13–26. This was given after the fall of Jerusalem, when the remnant had gone to Egypt. (See chapters xliii and xliv.) This also was fulfilled. Verse 26 promises a future restoration of Egypt. Compare this with Isaiah's prophecy (chapter xix:19–25).

3. A Message of Comfort: Verses 27–28. This blessed message of comfort also awaits its final great fulfillment in the coming days of promised blessing for Jacob's seed.

CONCERNING THE PHILISTINES.

CHAPTER XLVII.

This brief chapter is concerning the inhabitants of the borderland of Canaan, called Philistia. This announced judgment was fulfilled a short time after it was spoken by the prophet.

CONCERNING MOAB.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

1. The Overthrow of Moab. 1-10.
2. The Humiliation of Moab. 11-19.
3. Reaping What They Sowed. 20-28.
4. Destroyed on Account of its Pride. 29-47.

With these divisions the chapter may be studied in detail. Moab was of incestuous offspring (Gen. xix:37). Israel is now exhorted to flee and save itself because Moab is to be destroyed. Moab's national deity was Chemosh, who was also worshipped by the sister nation, the Ammonites. Chemosh was probably the same as Moloch. He is now to go forth into captivity with his priests and princes. On verse 10 critics say: "This bloodthirsty verse is surely not Jeremiah's." But they forget that the whole prophecy is introduced with, "Thus saith the Lord," and the critic's knife, which cuts out certain verses from this chapter, mutilates the Word of God. There is no valid reason to brand this and other verses as the work of some supplementer.

The chief places of Moab are mentioned. "The horn of Moab (horn the emblem of power) is cut off and his arm is broken, saith the Lord." And why this judgment? "For he has magnified himself against the Lord." They were filled with pride, yea, they were exceedingly proud. The Lord speaks of it thus: "His loftiness and his arrogancy and his pride and his haughtiness of heart." How God detests pride! In both Testaments it is marked out as the great abomination in the sight of God. Filled with pride and haughtiness, they derided Israel, God's people; whenever Israel was mentioned "they skipped for joy" (verse 27). Of verses 28 and 29, critics declare that they are mostly derived from Isaiah xv and xvi. These two chapters contain a similar prophecy about Moab, but these utterances by Jeremiah are not copied from Isaiah, but are a divine repetition of the coming judgment of that people. "Woe be unto thee Moab! the people of Chemosh perisheth! for thy sons are taken captives, and thy daughters captive." This is the final word in this predicted judgment of Moab. And thus Moab was broken.

The last verse speaks of a territorial restoration of Moab, not of a restitution of that wicked generation, as some teach. We do not know where a remnant of Moab is today, to possess in millennial times their former land; nor do we know how the Lord is going to accomplish it. But we know

He will fulfill His own Word and we do not need to invent some scheme of how it will be done.

CONCERNING AMMON, EDOM, DAMASKUS, KEDAR AND ELAM.

CHAPTER XLIX.

1. Concerning the Ammonites. 1-6.
2. Concerning Edom. 7-22.
3. Concerning Damaskus. 23-27.
4. Concerning Kedar and Hazor. 28-33.
5. Against Elam. 34-39.

Ammon was the younger brother of Moab, and, like the Moabites, the Ammonites were a wicked people, though they had no cities like Moab, but were restless wanderers; they were also the enemies of Israel. The predicted judgment has come. Where is Ammon today? In what tribe or nation is a remnant preserved? Only the Ominscient One knows. But their captivity, like that of Moab, will be brought back again in the days when Israel becomes the head of the nations.

Edom, springing from Esau, was the most outspoken enemy of Israel. In our annotations on the prophecy of Obadiah we return to this chapter. Their complete judgment is here announced. "For, lo, I will make thee small among the nations and despised among men. Thy terribleness has deceived thee and the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill. Though thou shouldest make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the Lord" (15–16). Here at least the critics concede that this is a true description of the dwelling places of Edom of old. "Its capital, Petra, lay in an amphitheater of mountains, accessible only through a narrow gorge, called the *Sik*, winding in with precipitous sides from the west; and the mountain sides round Petra, and the ravines about it, contain innumerable rock-hewn cavities, some being tombs, but

others dwellings in which the ancient inhabitants lived" (Canon Driver). No restoration for Edom is promised. Damaskus's anguish and sorrow is predicted next, followed by a prophecy concerning various Arabian tribes; Kedar and Hazor are to be smitten. The final prediction is as to Elam. Elam was east of South Babylonia and the lower Tigris, later known as Susians. This prophecy was given at the beginning of Zedekiah's reign. Elam became an ally of the Persian kingdom. Here her overthrow is foretold as well as her restoration "in the latter days."

BABYLON.

CHAPTER L-LI.

These two final chapters contain a great prophecy concerning Babylon, her overthrow and doom. The fifty-first chapter closes with the statement "thus far are the words of Jeremiah." There is a direct statement that Jeremiah wrote all these words. We find it at the close of chapter li:59–64. "Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that should come upon Babylon, even all these words that are written against Babylon." It would be a brazen infidelity which says Jeremiah did not write all these words. Yet the almost universally accepted view of the critics is that these chapters cannot be the work of Jeremiah. The German infidel, Professor Eichhorn, the man who coined the phrase "higher criticism," started this denial; Kuenen, Budde and others have followed in his steps. Others have modified this radical view and concede the possibility that Jeremiah may have been the author of these two chapters. No believer in the Word of God can have a moment's doubt as to this question.

An analysis of these two chapters would be difficult to make. We therefore point out some of the leading parts of this great utterance. The prophecy covers both the doom of Babylon as it has been and the doom of another, the mystical Babylon, so prominent in the last book of the Bible, in which also two chapters are devoted to Babylon.

Some hold that the literal Babylon is meant in Revelation; that the city in Mesopotamia must be rebuilt; that it will finally become the one great world center domineering the religious, commercial and political affairs of all the world, and that when this has taken place Jeremiah's prophecy will be fulfilled. A careful examination of this theory will show that it is untenable. It would mean that all the great world-centers of today must be wiped out first, and London, New York, and others would have to yield their supremacy to the restored Babylon. The chapters in Revelation show us clearly that a Babylon of a mystical nature is meant, which in spirit, in worldly glory and corruption corresponds to the ancient Babylon. This mystical Babylon is Rome. This has been the interpretation of the chapters of Revelation from the earliest times and is still maintained, with a few exceptions, by all sound and spiritual expositors of the Word of God.

The message begins with the command to publish among the nations the conquest of Babylon, that Bel (lord) is put to shame and that Merodach (the chief god of Babylon, known as Marduk in Babylonian inscriptions) is dismayed. The gods of Babylon are put to confusion on account of the fall of the city. The disaster comes from the north (Medo Persia, the conqueror of Babylon. See Dan. vii). Verses 4–7 predict the return of the nation thoroughly penitent. That the return of a small remnant after the defeat of Babylon does not exhaust this prophecy is obvious. The return promised here comes in the day when the times of the Gentiles are over, when Babylon and the Babylon spirit will pass away, when all false gods fall and the Lord is exalted in that day. Then the lost sheep of Israel will be found and gathered again. The invasion under Cyrus is described in verses 9–10. The fall of the Babylon in Revelation is not brought about by an invasion such as is described here, but by the ten horns of the beast, the revived Roman empire (Rev. lxvii:16; Dan. vii). Verse 13 announces the complete overthrow of the city, to become the hindermost of the nations, a wilderness, a dry land

and a desert. This ruin was not at once carried out, but gradually ancient Babylon became all that. The ruins of this once powerful city have been located north of Hilla, a town of about 25,000 inhabitants. Koldewey, of the German Orient Society, laid bare by excavation many of the ruins, showing that the city covered twelve square miles; great streets and canals, and the ruins of the Marduk temple have been found. These ruins can never be rebuilt. (See Isa. xlvii.) There is nothing which indicates that this once glorious city is to have a revival and then be destroyed once more and remain a wilderness after its destruction at some future time.

In her fall Babylon only reaped what she had sown. "For it is the vengeance of the Lord; take vengeance upon her; as she hath, do unto her" (verse 15). The same verdict is pronounced upon the Babylon of the end time, when Rome will once more have supremacy, when the present day Babylon-spirit will concentrate in a great world federation. "Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works; in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double" (Rev. xviii:6). The nations will then drink of the cup of God's wrath and judgment as the literal Babylon did. Coupled with these judgment predictions are the future blessings of Israel. When the Lord overthrows the final Babylon, as seen in the book of Revelation, when the great whore is judged and her seat, Rome, in Italy, goes up in smoke, then Israel's day of glory and blessing breaks. "In those days, and in that time, saith Jehovah, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found; for I will pardon them whom I leave as a remnant" (verse 20; see chapter xxxi:34; Micah vii:18, and Rom. xi:25–28). After still more predictions concerning the fall and doom of Babylon (verses 21–32), we find another prophecy of comfort. When the times of the Gentiles end with the complete dethronement of Babylon in its mystical meaning as pictured in Revelation, the Redeemer of Irsael will arise to plead the cause of His people Israel. The fiftieth

chapter ends with an additional description of the desolation of Babylon.

The fifty-first chapter is a continued prophecy of the doom and utter desolation of the proud mistress of the nations. Much here connects with Rev. xviii. The remnant of Israel is addressed in verses 5 and 6. Compare with Rev. xviii:4. It is the same command to flee Babylon, a principle which is in force today as regards the true church and her separation from ecclesiastical evil. The golden cup mentioned in verse 7 is also mentioned in Revelation in chapter xvii:4, in the description of papal Rome and her evil abominations. In the rest of the chapter God's dealing in judgment is wonderfully told out, prophetic of that coming day when the Lord will deal with the world in judgment. This must be the reason why such an extended prophecy is given. It all goes beyond the judgment of the literal Babylon. We call attention to the last verses of this long chapter. We read there that the prophet, after he wrote down all these words against Babylon, gave the book to Seraiah, chief chamberlain of Zedekiah. This was before the fall of Jerusalem. Seraiah was evidently the brother of Baruch (chapter xxxii:12). While Jeremiah knew the significant position that Babylonia, and especially King Nebuchadnezzar, had been given by the sovereign Lord, on account of which he urged submission to the Chaldeans; he also knew even then, before Jerusalem fell, of Babylon's fall and doom. Seraiah went to Babylon and he was to read the roll there, probably not in public, but in private. After reading, he was to speak certain words (verse 62), then bind a stone to the roll and cast it into the Euphrates. When the roll was sinking he was to say, "Thus shall Babylon sink and shall not rise again." In our New Testament book of prophecy we read: "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more" (Rev. xviii:21). That great predicted end of all God-defiance and opposition,

typified by Babylon and its past glory, will surely come. Jeremiah uttered his last word.

The last chapter of Jeremiah is not from his pen; some other inspired writer was moved by the Holy Spirit to add the history of the capture of Jerusalem and the fate of the people.

The substance of this appendix is found is 2 Kings xxiv: 18–20 and xxv:1–21, 27–30. The reader will find in the second book of Kings our annotations on this history. But why is it added here once more? Evidently to show how literally the judgment predictions and divine warnings given through Jeremiah were fulfilled. For a time the false prophets had their way; their lying messages, their words of delusion and false hope were listened to and believed. The lot of the prophet of God was a lonely lot; he was rejected and he suffered. Yea, often the weeping prophet was discouraged and filled with gloom. But the time came when he was vindicated and God's Word was vindicated, while the false prophets were found out to be liars and deceivers.

In our own day we have the false prophets still with us, men and women, who deny the truth and teach error. They speak of world improvement, world betterment, and world conquest. What God has spoken concerning "wrath and judgment to come" is set aside. Those who preach and teach according to the infallible Word of God, who see no better world, no universal righteousness and peace, are branded as pessimists. The "day of the Lord" and the "coming of the Lord" are sneered at. But as the Word of God spoken by Jeremiah was vindicated, so the Word of God will be vindicated again, till all the enemies of the written Word, the Bible, and the living Word, Christ, are silenced forever.

LAMENTATIONS

Lamentations

INTRODUCTION

In the Hebrew Bible, the small book which follows in our English Bible the book of Jeremiah, is placed in the portion which is called "Kethubim" (the writings). It is one of the five, so called "Megilloth." The Septuagint translation begins with a brief paragraph which is not found in our version: "It came to pass that, after Israel was taken captive and Jerusalem was made desolate, Jeremiah sat weeping and lamented with this lamentation over Jerusalem, and said . . . ;" then the first chapter begins. The Vulgate (Latin) translation has adopted this statement and also the Arabic version.

There can be no question that Jeremiah is the inspired author of these outbursts of grief, as well as confession of sin and dependence on Jehovah. Yet this has not only been seriously questioned, but positively denied. Critics claim that probably chapters ii and iv must have been written by an eye-witness of Judah's conquest; they deny that it was Jeremiah and think it must have been one of the exiles. The claim is made because it appears to them that these two chapters lean strongly on Ezekiel and parts, they say, must have been copied after Ezekiel's writings. The other chapters, they say, are much later. Critics like Budde and Cheyne put the third chapter in the pre-Maccabean period towards the end of the third century. All is nothing but guesswork, which is proved by the different theories of these scholars, which clash with each other. To show the superficial method of these men we shall give a few of the star arguments against the Jeremianic authorship of Lamentations. They say that iv:17 could hardly have been written by Jeremiah because the writer includes himself with those who had expected help from Egypt. But the critic does not see that the prophet identifies himself with the nation, as Daniel did. Then, again, they object to iv:20, because it speaks of Zedekiah in such a way as Jeremiah would never have spoken of him. But how do they know? Zedekiah was still the Lord's Anointed, even as David recognized down to the sad end of Saul, the king as the Lord's Anointed. Instead of being an argument against the authorship of Jeremiah, it is one for it.

Then these "literary" critics claim that the smooth and beautiful style cannot be Jeremiah's. "The whole style of these poems, though exquisitely beautiful and touching, and studded with the thoughts of the great prophet, is absolutely different to anything we find in the long roll of Jeremiah's great work. It is too artificial, too much studied, too elaborately worked out" (A. B. Davidson). If A. B. Davidson

and other critics had just a little faith in Divine inspiration they would not write such puerile criticism. As if the Spirit of God could not change the style and manner of the writings of one of His chosen instruments!

The Lamentations are correctly divided into five chapters in a very remarkable way. Chapters i and ii consist each of twenty-two verses of three lines each. All is written in a certain meter. Each verse begins in both chapters with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. They are acrostics. The third chapter has instead of 22 verses, 66 verses, that is, 3 x 22. The first three verses of this chapter begin each with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet; the next three with the second letter, so that in these 66 verses the Hebrew alphabet is again followed. The fourth chapter is also arranged in the same manner, acrostically, each of the 22 verses begin with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The last chapter shows no such arrangement. We doubt not that in all this there may be a hidden, a deeper meaning, which no Saint of God has yet discovered.

The message of this book is extremely precious. It is a pity that so few of God's people have ever paid a closer attention to this book. Here is indeed a great mine of comfort and spiritual instruction which will prove very wholesome to all those who walk with God.

When Israel suffered in Egypt the Lord said: "I have surely seen the affliction of my people" (Exod. iii:7). Lamentations shows the same blessed fact, that Jehovah has a loving and deep interest in the afflictions of His people through which they pass on account of their sins. He who had to chastise His people is nevertheless moved with compassion in their behalf. Yea, in their affliction He Himself is afflicted and He yearns over them. The feelings, deep emotions of sorrow and humiliation, expressed by the mouthpiece of Jehovah, Jeremiah, were produced by the Spirit of Christ, in the heart of the prophet.

"There is nothing more affecting than the sentiments produced in the heart by the conviction that the subject of affliction is beloved of God, that He loves that which He is obliged to smite, and is obliged to smite that which He loves. The prophet, while laying open the affliction of Jerusalem, acknowledges that the sin of the people had caused it. Could that diminish the sorrow of his heart? If on the one hand it was a consolation, on the other it humbled and made him hide his face. The pride of the enemy, and their joy in seeing the affliction of the beloved of God, give occasion to sue for compassion on behalf of the afflicted, and judgment on the malice of the enemy."*

Prophetically we may look upon these lamentations as embodying the soul-exercise of the godly remnant of God's earthly people passing in a future day through the great tribulation. That beautiful prayer found in the last chapter will then be answered, "renew our days of

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*Synopsis.

old" and all the glorious promises given to Israel will then be fulfilled.

No further division of this book is needed; the division into five chapters is perfect.

JERUSALEM'S GREAT DESOLATION AND THE SORROW OF HIS PEOPLE.

CHAPTER I.

The chapter begins with an outburst of grief over Jerusalem's desolation. Once she was a populous city; now she is solitary. Once she was great among the nations, like a princess among provinces, and now she is widowed. Then in the next verse we hear her weeping; she weeps all night long; none is there to comfort her; her friends have turned against her, they have become her enemies. She was disobedient to her Lord, she rejected His Word, she gave up her holy place as His separated people and now "she findeth no rest." The Lord's hand is upon her for the multitude of her transgressions. The hopeful note we find in verses 8–11. Here is confession of her guilt and shame; here is humiliation and appeal to the Lord on account of the enemy. "See, O Lord, and behold; for I am become vile." Such humiliation and self-judgment is pleasing in the Lord's sight.

In verse 12 Jerusalem speaks: "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of His fierce anger." The passer-by who beholds the ruins of Zion is asked to look upon the desolations and then to consider that the Lord in His righteous anger smote her, who is still His beloved. Well may we think of Him, who had to say, "See if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow," who was smitten and afflicted, upon whom Jehovah's rod rested, over whose blessed head all the waves and billows of Divine judgment-wrath rolled, He who is the Beloved, the Son of God, our Lord. Again the prophet breaks out in weeping, "His eye runneth down with water." He is deeply affected

over the desolation and judgment which has taken place. But a greater One, greater than Jeremiah, stood centuries after before the same city, brought back from the ruin of Jeremiah's time. And as He beheld that city He wept, because His ominiscient eye beheld a still more appalling judgment for city and nation.

Forsaken, uncomforted, distressed, humiliated, sighing and crying, owning her rebellion, vindicating Jehovah and His righteousness, Jerusalem sits in the dust, "abroad the sword bereaveth, at home there is death."

WHAT THE LORD HAS DONE.

CHAPTER II.

The great catastrophe continues in vivid description throughout this chapter also. Not an enemy has done it, not Nebuchadrezzar and his Chaldean hordes, but the Lord is the executor of all. The beauty of Israel He cast down; He swallowed up the habitations of Jacob; He burned against Jacob like a flame; He bent His bow like an enemy; He poured out His fury like fire; He was as an enemy. These are a few of the many expressions with which the righteousness of the Lord in judging His people is acknowledged.

And what a great description of Jerusalem and her inhabitants we read in verses 8–16. Gates broken down; king and princes among the Gentiles; law abandoned; no more visions! Elders on the ground in sackcloth and ashes; virgins hanging their heads; children and sucklings swooning in the streets—and all that pass by clap their hands, hiss, and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem.

"The Lord hath done what He had devised; He hath fulfilled the Word that He had commanded in the days of old." Oh! that the people today would hear and believe that God will yet fulfil other judgment messages and deal with the world on account of its sin. The chapter ends with a prayer.

THE PROPHET'S SUFFERING AND DISTRESS.

CHAPTER III.

This chapter is intensely personal. None but Jeremiah could have written these wonderful expressions of sorrow, the sorrows of the people of God into which he entered so fully, in such a way that they become his own. He shared all their afflictions, bore them himself and then was hated by them. It was the Spirit of Christ who created these feelings in the heart of the prophet. In reading these words of deep distress and the words of faith and waiting for Him, we must look beyond Jeremiah and see a picture of our Lord, "the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," His sorrow and His afflictions, the emotions of His holy soul, as well as the experiences and soul exercise of the believing remnant of Israel in days to come.

The prophet speaks of himself as one who is smitten by the rod of God's wrath, the man that hath seen affliction. He had not deserved that wrath; the wrath and affliction have come upon a sinful people, but he identifies himself with them. What must have been the suffering and the affliction of our Lord when He, at the close of His blessed life, suffered and died the death of the cross! The rod of righteousness fell on Him. More than Jeremiah did, He tasted that wrath, when He who knew no sin was made sin for us. "He (God) hath bent His bow, and set Me as a mark for the arrow. He hath caused the arrows of His quiver to enter into my reins. I was a derision to all my people and their song all the day" (verses 12–14). He speaks of "the wormwood and the gall" (verse 19); of the "smitten cheek filled with reproach" (verse 30).

Through such suffering Jeremiah passed as well as the godly of all ages, as well as those in the future. Jeremiah's affliction but faintly foreshadows the afflictions of the afflicted One. But while Jeremiah suffered with Jerusalem and for Jerusalem, he was not destitute of comfort. He knew the Lord and He sustained him in his affliction. How beautifully he speaks of the mercies of the Lord, of His

compassions which never fail, of the greatness of His faithfulness (verses 22, 23). Such is the comfort still of all those who know the Lord; it is the song in the night: "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in Him. The Lord is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him." All His Saints speak thus when they feel the chastening hand of the Lord. He has full confidence in the Lord and knows "He doth not afflict willingly," and that "the Lord will not cast off for ever." And again, "though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies."

Beginning with verse 40, a real return is described. There is self-examination: "Let us search and try our ways and turn again to the Lord." This is followed by prayer: "Let us lift up our hearts with our hands unto God in the heavens." Then comes confession: "We have transgressed and have rebelled; Thou hast not pardoned." It describes prophetically the repentance of a Jewish remnant when this present age ends and the Lord is about to be manifested in visible glory. Jeremiah's lament over Jerusalem's condition and the nation's state is once more recorded in verses 45–47. "Thou hast made us an offscouring and refuse in the midst of the people. All our enemies have opened their mouths against us. Fear and snare is come upon us, desolation and destruction." Such will also be the complaint of the suffering remnant. This chapter ends with an imprecatory prayer." Render unto them a recompense, O Lord, according to the works of their hands. Give them sorrow of heart, thy curse unto them. Persecute and destroy them in anger from under the heavens of the Lord." It is like the imprecatory prayers in the Psalms, prayers which will be prayed when the godly in Israel suffer under their enemies in the great tribulation.

THE DEPARTED GLORY AND THE CUP OF SHAME.

CHAPTER IV.

This new lament begins with a description of the former

glory of Zion and its present wretchedness; the glory is departed:

How is the gold become dim! The most pure gold changed!
The stones of the sanctuary are poured forth at the top of every street.
The precious sons of Zion, just like fine gold—
How are they now esteemed like earthern pitchers, the work of the potters' hands!
Even the jackals draw out the breast, giving suck to their young—
The daughter of my people is become cruel, like the ostriches in the wilderness.
The tongue of the sucking child cleaveth to the roof of his mouth for thirst.
The young children ask bread, no man breaketh it unto them.
They that did feel delicately are desolate in the streets.
They that were brought up in scarlet embrace dunghills.

What degradation and shame! The Lord had called Zion to be like the pure gold, precious and glorious. In his beautiful parable, Ezekiel speaks thus of Jerusalem's glory: "Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was of fine linen and silk and broidered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil; and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper in a kingdom" (Ezekiel xvi:13). The gold is become dim, the pure gold changed. Instead of the linen and silk there is sackcloth and ashes; instead of the flour, the honey, and the oil, there is want and famine. When the golden-glory departed from Zion, then the Lord revealed that Nebuchadnezzar is "the head of gold," the starting point of the times of the Gentiles. The glory had departed and Zion had to drink of shame and want to the full on account of her sins (verse 6). And what a contrast now between what the Nazarites and nobles of the nation were once and what they are now. They were purer than snow, whiter than milk; and now they are blacker than coal. They were ruddy in body; and now their skin cleaveth to their bones. What a horrible transformation sin had wrought! Sin is a robber; sin brings its wages. It robs of glory and gives nothing but suffering, shame and death. All that God had spoken long ago, the very curses generation after generation had read in the book

of the law (Deut. xxviii:56, 57; Lev. xxvi:29), had come upon them. The kings of the earth, the inhabitants of the world, knew that Jerusalem was unconquerable, for the Lord of all the earth was Zion's King and Lord. What no earthly power could have done, to enter Jerusalem and spoil the city, the Lord had done, "on account of the sons of her prophets, the iniquities of her priests, that have shed the blood of the just in the midst of her." Jerusalem was built again. Once more after the seventy years the city was restored, the temple rebuilt. Then the Just One came, the Messiah of David, the Lord of Glory. They shed the blood of the Just One, and now, as verse 13 says, "They wander about blind."

And Edom! She had rejoiced at Zion's overthrow, even as Gentiles have despised Israel. But there is judgment in store for the nations, mercy for Israel, when the punishment is accomplished. "He will no more carry thee away into captivity."

THE PRAYER OF HOPE.

CHAPTER V.

The lamentations end with a prayer: "Remember, O Lord, what is come upon us; consider and behold our reproach." It is the prayer of confession and of hope, which reaches the heart of the God of Israel. The prophets, in behalf of the nation, pours out his confession: "The crown is fallen from our head; woe unto us that we have sinned." And there is hope in the Lord who remaineth, whose throne is from generation to generation. The prayer, "Turn thou us unto Thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old" (verse 21) will some day be blessedly answered. The eightieth Psalm contains the same prayer a number of times, and there He is mentioned who will yet save His people Israel from their sins. "Let Thy hand be upon the Man of thy right hand, upon the Son of Man Whom Thou madest strong for Thyself. So will not we go back from Thee; quicken us and we will call on Thy Name.

Turn us again O Lord God of hosts, cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved."

"The prophet now presents in this chapter the whole affliction of the people *to God*, as an object of compassion and mercy. This is an onward step in the path of these deep exercises of heart. He is at peace with God; he is in His presence; it is no longer a heart struggling with inward misery. All is confessed before Jehovah, who is faithful to His people, so that he can call on God to consider the affliction in order that He may remember His suffering people according to the greatness of His compassions. For Jehovah changes not (chapter v:19–21). The sense of the affliction remains in full, but God is brought in, and everything having been recalled and judged before Him, all that had happened being cleared up to the heart, Jeremiah can rest in the proper and eternal relations between God and His beloved people; and, shutting himself into his direct relations with his God, he avails himself of His goodness, as being in those relations, to find in the affliction of the beloved people an opportunity for calling His attention to them. This is the true position of faith—that which it attains as the result of its exercises before God at the sight of the affliction of His people (an affliction so much the deeper from its being caused by sin).

"This Book of Lamentations is remarkable because we see in it the expression of the thoughts of the Spirit of God, that is, those produced in persons under His influence, the vessels of His testimony, when God was forced to set aside that which He had established in the world as His own. There is nothing similar in the whole circle of the revelations and of the affections of God. He says himself, How could He treat them as Admah and Zeboim? Christ went through it in its fullest extent. But He went through it in His own perfection with God. He acted thus with regard to Jerusalem, and wept over it. But here man is found to have lost the hope of God interposing on His people's behalf. God would not abandon a man who was one of this people, who loved them, who understood that God loved them, that they

were the object of His affection. He was one of them. How could he bear the idea that God had cast them off? No doubt God would re-establish them. But in the place where God had set them, all hope was lost forever. In the Lord's own presence it is never lost. If is in view of this that all these exercises of heart are gone through, until the heart can fully enter into the mind and affections of God Himself. Indeed, this is always true

"The Spirit gives us here a picture of all these exercises. How gracious! To see the Spirit of God enter into all these details, not only of the ways of God, but of that also which passes through a heart in which the judgment of God is felt by grace, until all is set right in the presence of God Himself. Inspiration gives us not only the perfect thoughts of God, and Christ the perfection of man before God, but also all the exercises produced in our poor hearts, when the perfect Spirit acts in them, so far as these thoughts, all mingled as they are, refer in the main to God, or are produced by Him. So truly cares He for us! He hearkens to our sighs, although much of imperfection and of that which belongs to our own heart is mixed with them. It is this that we see in the Book of Lamentations, in the Psalms, and elsewhere, and abundantly, though in another manner, in the New Testament."*

*Synopsis.

EZEKIEL

The Prophet Ezekiel

INTRODUCTION.

From the opening verses of of the Book we learn that Ezekiel was the son of Buzi, the priest, and belonged consequently to the much honored Zadok family. That he knew the nobility of Jerusalem well and was intimate with them may be indirectly learned from the eleventh chapter. Rabbinical tradition makes Buzi (which means "contempt") a son of Jeremiah. There is no evidence for this. Eleven years before the complete ruin of the city and the temple by the King of Babylon, Ezekiel was carried away into the captivity. This deportation is recorded in 2 Kings xxiv:14. Before Ezekiel with the princes and the mighty men were taken into captivity, others had been removed to Babylon, notably Daniel and his three companions. Ezekiel must have known Daniel personally. His name is found three times in this book (chapters xiv:14,20, xxviii:3).

Ezekiel was not a youth, as generally supposed, when he was deported to Babylon, for the matured character of a priest which appears in his writings and his full and intimate acquaintance with the temple service render such a supposition highly improbable. Jewish tradition declares that he exercised already the prophetic office before he was carried away.

The name Ezekiel means "strengthened by God." It has been stated by some that this is not the original name of the prophet, but his official title, which he adopted on account of his ministry among the people. Very interesting on this controverted point is the statement of a rabbinical comment. The declaration is made that the prophets of God received their significant names, so closely linked with and expressive of the character of their messages, from above, and not according to the will of their earthly parents. God called them to their work and had them named accordingly before they ever entered upon their offices as prophets. We believe this may be correct, especially in view of Jeremiah i:5.

Where He Ministered.

The place where we find Ezekiel is the river Chebar. This river is now known by the name *Kabour*. It emptied into the Euphrates north of Babylon and was also called *Nar - Kabari*, the great canal. Here Nebuchadnezzar had started a colony of captives. In chapter iii:15, the name of the place is given; it was at Tel-abib. In this settlement the prophet seems to have lived. Two passages in the book tell us

that he had his own house (iii:24, viii:1). We also know that he was married (xxiv:16–18). The death of his wife is the only event he mentions of his personal history, and that would probably have not been recorded if it were not connected with his prophetic office. The prophecies he uttered among the captives are carefully dated. The first date is found in chapter i:1–2.

Ezekiel and Jeremiah.

Ezekiel's great prophetic ministry is closely connected with that of Jeremiah. When Ezekiel had his first great vision on the banks of the river Chebar, Jeremiah had already been a prophet for thirty-five years. Only a few years more remained for this great man of God. That Ezekiel must have been acquainted with Jeremiah and his messages of warning and exhortation is more than likely. Yet it is strange there is not a single reference to Jeremiah in the entire book of Ezekiel. It is strange in view of the fact that the messages of these two men have so much in common. Critics make the assertion that Ezekiel as a prophet was moulded by the teaching of Jeremiah. Kuenen claims that Ezekiel must have been for many years the close student of Jeremiah's writings. Before Ezekiel proceeded to write his own prophecies, his mind, it is claimed, had become so saturated with the ideas and language of Jeremiah that every part of his book betrays the influence of his predecessor. This view would make Ezekiel an enthusiastic admirer and copyist of Jeremiah. But in the book of Ezekiel the phrases "Thus saith the Lord God"—"The Word of the Lord came unto me"—occur over and over again. The words he spoke, the mighty messages he delivered, were not produced by the influence of Jeremiah nor by his example, but by the Spirit of God. Other critics have even done greater dishonor to this chosen instrument of the Lord and to the Word he preached. We quote from *The New Century Bible:* "It would appear that there runs through all the prophet's activities, at least in the earlier period, a strain of mental abnormality—perhaps of actual malady. By some writers this has been supposed to be a form of catalepsy. Probably Ezekiel was no more a cataleptic than Paul; with equal probability he was what would now be called a 'psychical subject,' and as such liable to trances—and perhaps a clairvoyant." Such are the ridiculous things invented by men, who claim scholarship, and whose aim is to deny the supernatural origin of the words and the visions of the prophets of God.

The fact is that Jeremiah and Ezekiel were called by Jehovah to specific ministries. In their characters and natural temperaments they differed greatly. Jeremiah, assuming, as a very young man, his prophetic office during the reign of Josiah, was called to deliver the messages of the awful judgments which were to come upon Jerusalem and

had to witness these in their execution. He was an extremely kind, gentle, and tender-hearted man. Jeremiah is the prophet of a dying nation; the agony of Judah's prolonged death struggle is reproduced with tenfold intensity in the inward conflict which rends the heart of the prophet. Ezekiel was of a different temperament. The deep soul exercise we find so often in Jeremiah, his tender, loving sympathies, are almost entirely absent in Ezekiel. He lacked the emotional character of Jeremiah. He was a man of great energy and vigor; he was stern and had a deep sense of his human responsibility. Both prophets uncover the corrupt conditions of Judah and condemn them. The condemnations in Ezekiel are far more severe than those in Jeremiah. The style of Ezekiel is also different from that employed by his contemporary.

In all this he differs from Jeremiah; and more so in the greater and more complete visions concerning the future.

His Ministry

There is an evident connection between the communication which Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem unto the captives in Babylon and the beginning of Ezekiel's ministry. The letter of Jeremiah is found in chapter xxix of the Book of Jeremiah. It is an interesting document. It seems to have been occasioned by a number of false prophets who had appeared among the captives, and who encouraged the rebellious and disobedient spirit which prevailed among the exiles. They prophesied falsely, led the people away, and awakened the delusive hope of an early return from the captivity. While Jeremiah continued to minister to the feeble few and the poor, who were left behind, Ezekiel was engaged among the captives and contended against these false prophets and against the false hopes of the people who gave no evidences of repentance. Inasmuch as Jerusalem had not yet been completely destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, the captives, who had listened to the false prophets, expected a speedy return to their own land. To dispel this false hope Jeremiah had sent them the message, "For thus saith the Lord, that after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place" (Jer. xxix:10). Ezekiel then labored also to dispel this false hope preached by the prophets, whom the Lord had not sent. By his stern and solemn words, by divinely commanded actions and symbols, he had to deliver the message that there was no hope for Jerusalem. When the catastrophe came at last, his ministry changed. He comforts the disappointed and heartbroken people and delivers his great restoration messages.

This great prophet had to do certain divinely commanded things in the presence of the people who were living in deception after having

listened to the false prophets. In chapter iii:24–26 he had to shut himself up, bind himself, and then he was made dumb. Then he was commanded to lie upon his right side and upon his left for 430 days (chapter iv:4–8). In chapter iv:9 he had to eat unclean bread. Then he had to shave his head and beard (chapter v:1); to carry a captive's baggage (chapter xxii:3–7); when his wife died, he was not to mourn (chapter xxiv:15-20); and again he lost his speech (chapter xxiv:27). The key to all this is found in chapter xxiv:24.

The visions of glory Ezekiel had belong to some of the greatest recorded in the Word of God. Much in the beginning of the book reminds of the last book of the Bible, the Revelation. We mention a few passages to be compared: Ezekiel i with Rev. iv and v. Ezekiel iii:3 with Rev. x:10. Ezekiel viii:3 with Rev. xiii:14, 15. Ezekiel ix with Rev. vii. Ezekiel x with Rev. viii:1–5. The critics declare upon this striking correspondency that "much of the imagery of Revelation is borrowed from Ezekiel."

THE DIVISIONS OF THE BOOK.

A careful reading of the Book of Ezekiel shows, in the first place, that the Prophet received messages and saw visions before the final destruction of Jerusalem, and after that catastrophe had taken place in fulfillment of his inspired predictions, he received other prophecies. The predictions preceding the fall of Jerusalem are the predictions of the judgment to fall upon the city and upon Gentile nations, the enemies of Israel. The predictions Ezekiel received after the city had been destroyed are the predictions of blessing and glory for Israel and Jerusalem in the future. The first part of the book has found a fulfillment in the destruction of the city by Nebuchadnezzar. The second part is awaiting its fulfillment at the close of the times of the Gentiles, when Israel will be regathered, restored and the glory of the Lord returns to another temple, which Ezekiel beheld in a magnificent vision. All will be accomplished when the Lord returns to dwell in the midst of His people, so that the name of the city will be "Jehovah-Shammah" —"the Lord is there" (chapter xlviii:35). These two main divisions are clearly marked in the book itself. In chapter xxxiii:21, after the Prophet had received a renewed call as watchman, we read: "And it came to pass in the twelfth

year of our captivity, in the tenth month, in the fifth day of the month, that one that had escaped out of Jerusalem came unto me, saying, The city is smitten." This determines the two parts.

I. PREDICTIONS BEFORE THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM. (Chapters i-xxxii.)

II. PREDICTIONS AFTER THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM. (Chapters xxxiii-xlviii.)

To show the perfect and orderly arrangement of the whole Book of Ezekiel we shall give a complete analysis.

I. PREDICTIONS BEFORE THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

Chapters i-xxxii.

Section A. Judgment Predictions Concerning Jerusalem.

Chapters i-xxiv.

1. *The Vision of the Glory of the Lord and the Call of the Prophet* (i-iii:14).

2. *The Judgment announced. Four signs and their meaning. The two messages.* ("*The Word of the Lord came unto me*" (*chapters vi and vii; chapters iii*:15-*vii*:27).

3. *Visions in relation to Jerusalem* (*chapters viii-xi*).

a. The vision of abomination in the Temple. Chapter viii.
b. The vision of the man clothed in linen with the inkhorn. Chapter ix.
c. The vision of the coals of fire. Chapter x.
d. The vision concerning the leaders. The Glory departs. Chapter xi.

4. *Signs, Messages and Parables* (*chapters xii-xix*).

a. Signs given through the Prophet. Chapter xii:1–20.
b. The Message concerning a speedy judgment. Chapter xii:21–28.
c. The Message against false prophets and prophetesses. Chapter xiii.
d. The Message against the idolatrous elders. Chapter xiv.
e. The Parable of the Vine given to the fire. Chapter xv.

f. The Parable of the abandoned child and Jerusalem's harlotry. Chapter xvi.

g. The Parable and Riddle of the two eagles and the vine. Chapter xvii.

h. The Message concerning the righteous judgments of God. Chapter xviii.

i. The Lamentations for the Princes of Israel. Chapter xix.

5. Further and Final Predictions concerning the Judgment of Jerusalem (chapter xx-xxiv).

a. Jehovah rehearses His mercies bestowed upon Israel. Chapter xx.

b. The impending Judgment announced. Chapter xxi.

c. Jerusalem's sins and whoredoms. Chapter xxii-xxiii.

d. The Parable of the boiling pot. The last word. Chapter xxiv.

Section B. Predictions of Judgments against the Nations.

Chapters xxv-xxxii.

1. *Against Ammon, Moab, Edom and the Philistines (chapter xxv).*

2. *Against Tyrus and Zidon (chapters xxvi-xxviii).*

3. *Against Egypt (chapters xxix-xxxii).*

II. PREDICTIONS AFTER THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

Chapters xxxiii-xlviii.

Section A. The Watchman and the Shepherds. Chapters xxxiii-xxxiv.

1. *The renewed call of Ezekiel as Watchman (chapter xxxiii*:1–20).

2. *Ezekiel's mouth opened after Jerusalem's fall (chapter xxxiii*:21–33).

3. *Message against the Shepherds of Israel (chapter xxxiv*: 1–19).

4. *The true Shepherd and Restoration promised (chapter xxxiv*:20–26).

Section B. Judgment Announced Against Mount Seir and Israel's Final Restoration Promised. Chapters xxxv-xxxvi.

1. *The Message against Seir and Idumea* (*chapter xxxv*).
2. *The Message of Comfort for Israel* (*chapter xxxvi*).

Section C. The Future Blessings of Israel. The Nation Regathered. Their Enemies Overthrown. The Millennial Temple.

Chapters xxxvii-xlviii.

1. *The Vision of the Dry Bones. Judah and Israel reunited* (*chapter xxxvii*).
2. *The last enemies, Gog and Magog, and their destruction* (*chapters xxxviii-xxxix*).
3. *The Millennial Temple and its Worship; the division of the Land* (*chapters xl-xlviii*).

Analysis and Annotations

I. PREDICTIONS BEFORE THE FALL OF JERUSALEM.

Chapters i-xxxii.

A. Judgment Predictions Concerning Jerusalem.

Chapter i-xxiv.

I. THE VISION OF GLORY AND THE CALL OF THE PROPHET.

CHAPTER I-III:14.

1. The Introduction. 1-5.
2. The Vision of Glory. 4-28.
3. Ezekiel's Call and Commission. ii:1-8.
4. The Roll Eaten; the Repeated Commission. ii:9-iii:14.

I. The Introduction: Verses 1–3. The introductory words give us the time when Ezekiel was among the captives by the river Chebar. Four things are mentioned by Ezekiel, who is evidently the author of this book, for he uses the personal pronoun—the heavens were opened—he saw visions of God—the Word of the Lord came unto him—the hand of the Lord was upon him. Ezekiel is the only prophet in the Old Testament of whom it is said that he saw the heavens opened. Four times the New Testament mentions opened heavens (Matt. iii:16; John i:51; Rev. iv:1; xix:11). He then saw the visions of God concerning His governmental dealings with His people Israel. Then the hand of the Lord was also upon him when the Word of the Lord had come unto him. Notice the order: An opened heaven, a vision, the call, and enablement by the power of God. Such is still the order for the servants of the Lord. The phrase, "The hand of the Lord was upon him," or came upon me, is found seven times in Ezekiel, in chapters i:3, iii:14 and 22, viii:1, xxxiii:22, xxxvii:1, xl:1.

2. The Vision of Glory: Verses 4–28. Then he had his great and wonderful vision, which is repeatedly mentioned in his book. We find it mentioned again in chapters x and xi, where it is seen departing from Jerusalem. Its return is promised in connection with the great millennial temple after the Lord's Return (chapter xliii). The vision is the vision of the glory of the Lord (i:28). The vision comes from the North, for a storm cloud of divine indignation from the North (Babylon) was to burst over the house of Judah. The whirlwind, the cloud, and the fire Ezekiel beheld are symbols of glory, the divine presence and judgment. (See Psa. xviii:8–13; Hab. iii; Jer. iv:12–13). The vision then indicated the presence of the God of Israel and His glory, ready to deal in judgment with His apostate people. The living creatures are the same as mentioned and seen in Rev. iv:6–9. They are the cherubim, not fictitious creatures or symbols, but real beings. Their position is in connection with the throne. But upon the throne there was one who had the likeness as the appearance of a man. And this man was enshrouded in glory, with the rainbow about him. All this shows forth the Glory of Him who is God's vision, glory and presence, the Son of God. It anticipates the Lord Jesus Christ, His exaltation upon the throne, government and judgment resting in His hands, who is now the Man in the glory. While the cherubim with their fourfold faces also symbolize the Lord Jesus, here in this vision they are seen in connection with judgment. It is the same in Revelation (Rev. vi, xv:7). And then the wheels and their work. In them was the spirit of these great creatures; the rims of the wheels (not rings) were full of eyes. There was an orderly movement of these wheels. The wheels are on the chariot upon which rested the throne of God. They show forth and symbolize the purposes of God in the execution of His inerrant governmental dealings on earth. God controls it all, and His Spirit directs every movement. Much that is ridiculous has been written on this, and some would-be expositors claim that Ezekiel beheld an aeroplane.

"Intelligence, strength, stability and swiftness in judgment, and, withal, the movement of the whole course of earthly events, depended on the throne. This living energy animated the whole. The cherubic supporters of the throne, full of eyes themselves, moved by it; the wheels of God's government moved by the same spirit, and went straight forward. All was subservient to the will and purpose of Him who sat on the throne judging right. Majesty, government and providence united to form the throne of His glory. But all the instruments of His glory were below the firmament; He whom they glorified was above.*"

3. Ezekiel's Commission. Call and Commission. Chapter ii:1–8. We see Ezekiel prostrate upon his face. Then a voice spoke, not the voice of a cherubim; while in Revelation the cherubim speak, in Ezekiel they are silent. Jehovah addressed Ezekiel as Son of man; the title which is found exactly one hundred times in this book. Daniel only besides Ezekiel is called by this name. Our Lord called Himself by that name and used it in connection with His suffering, exaltation, glory, and coming again. Ezekiel, too, passed through much suffering, passing symbolically through sufferings which the nation at large was to undergo. He is, therefore, in a measure a type of the Messiah, who took Israel's sin and shame upon Himself.

The Word which spoke was followed by the Spirit—"and the Spirit entered into me when He spoke unto me." Thus the Word and the Spirit are always connected. Then Ezekiel received his commission. He is sent to an impudent and hard-hearted people. His message is to begin with: "Thus saith Jehovah-God." The sender is the Lord; the message is from Him. Then the sender gives also assurance and encouragement.

4. The Roll Eaten; the Repeated Commission; Chapters ii:9-iii:14. Compare the roll here with Zech. v:1–4; with the one of Rev. v, which the Lamb receives and opens, and the little roll in Rev. x:9, 10. These rolls have the same mean-

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*Synopsis.

ing, namely, the Word itself, the message of tribulation and judgment, which is written therein.

The Word must be received and eaten, that is the spiritual lesson. Ezekiel obeyed. It was self-surrender and though the message was a hard message, yet it was sweet unto him. Compare with Jer. xv:16. Ezekiel was to speak the words of the Lord unto them; and the sender predicts failure. "The house of Israel will not hearken unto thee, for they will not hearken unto me. It was to make no difference to the prophet. His commission was to speak Jehovah's words. Then Cherubim and wheels are in motion. He is lifted up and Jehovah's hand is strong upon him.

II. THE JUDGMENT ANNOUNCED. THE FOUR SIGNS AND THEIR MEANING. THE TWO MESSAGES.

CHAPTER III:15-VII:27.

This section extends from chapter iii:15 to the close of the seventh chapter. The prophet is told of his great responsibility as watchman, and has to enact four signs. Two solemn messages close this section. The first message predicts that the sword is to come upon the land and disperse them; the second message predicts the end.

1. The New Charge and Ezekiel's New Experience. Chapter iii:15–27.
2. The Sign of the Tile. Chapter iv:1–3.
3. The Sign of the Prophet's Physical Position. Verses 4–8.
4. The Sign of the Famine and the Defiled Bread. Verses 9-13
5. The Sign of the Shaving of Head and Face. Chapter v:1–4.
6. The Message of Denunciation. Verses 5–17.
7. The First Judgment Message: I Will Bring a Sword Upon You. Chapter vi.
8. The Second Judgment Message: The End is at Hand. Chapter vii.

1. The New Charge and Ezekiel's New Experience: Chapter iii:15–27. He had been transported by the power of God from the river Chebar to Tel-abib, where a number of captives dwelt. He sat for seven days in their presence without opening his lips. (See Job ii:13.) The silence of

Ezekiel was broken by the Lord, who spoke to him and gave him a new charge, that of a watchman unto the house of Israel. His duty was to be twofold: First, to hear the Word of the Lord from His own lips, and then to give the warning. It is a solemn message and charge, making known to the prophet his great responsibility.

The passage, as well as the corresponding one in chapter xxxiii:1–20, has been often used in the defence of what is termed "falling from Grace,"—that a true believer, who is saved by Grace, may by sinning become unsaved again and then perish in his sins like the wicked. The words "fallen from Grace" are found only once in the Bible, that is in Gal. v:4. The context shows what they mean. If a believer goes to the law to be justified before God, if he tries by his own works, and by ordinances, to be righteous before God, he abandons the ground of Grace. The dispensation in which we live is the dispensation of Grace; Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. v:21). The message delivered by God to Ezekiel is in fullest keeping with the character of the law-covenant, though Grace is also manifested in it. Righteousness has not the same meaning here as in the New Testament. We are constituted righteous by faith in Jesus Christ. It is now not the question of doing righteous deeds in order to be saved and live. We are saved by Grace through faith. "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned as of grace but as of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him, who justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness" (Rom. iv:4). And he who is justified by faith has peace with God. The true believer may sin, but he does not deliberately practice and live in sin, for "he that is born of God doth not commit (practice) sin" (1 John iii:9). If he falls in sin, a gracious provision is made. We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and therefore we can confess our sins; forgiveness and cleansing follow according to the divine promise (1 John i:9, ii:1–2).

Then he was commanded to go into the plain, where he again beheld the glory of the Lord and fell on his face. After

that, he was shut up in his house; they were to put bands upon him and bind him. He was not to go among the captives, and God made him dumb (verses 25-26). Yet this dumbness was not complete or constant. Finally it ceased altogether. That was after Jerusalem had fallen (chapter xxxiii:21–22). The dumbness was a sign to the nation—the sign of God's displeasure and the coming judgment upon Jerusalem (chapter xxiv:27).

2. The Sign of the Tile: Chapter iv:1–3. The word tile means "brick." They were used by the Babylonians to preserve their records, and many have been found marked with building plans, etc. The sign of the tile foretells the siege of Jerusalem and Jehovah's opposition against the city.

3. The Sign of the Prophet's Physical Position: Verses 4–8. While in the preceding sign Jehovah's action against Jerusalem was pictured, in this new sign a portrayal is given of the punishment which should come upon the inhabitants of the city. In his own person Ezekiel had to experience the great degradation and judgment which was to fall upon all the people. The critical school has invented all kinds of theories to explain, or rather to explain away, the divine command given to the prophet. They say that probably Ezekiel suffered from some form of epilepsy or catalepsy; they also point out the physical impossibility for a man to lie continuously for 390 days on his left side. But it says nowhere that the Prophet should be in that position day and night during these allotted days. The 390 and 40 days are symbolical. They mean years, giving us a total of 430 years. This reminds us of Exod. xii:40–41, where the sojourning of the children of Israel in Egypt is given as 430 years.

But the 390 years apply more specifically to Israel, the period of unfaithfulness of the ten tribes, beginning with Jeroboam (1 Kings xi:31). The 40 years describe the unfaithfulness of the house of Judah. The captives were reminded by the Prophet's position of the shameful history of their long apostasy. But more than that. The Lord said to Ezekiel: "I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity . . . so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of

Israel." The sign, therefore, pictured the actual punishment which was now to fall upon the nation.

4. The Sign of the Famine and the Defiled Bread: Verses 9–13. Both the sign of the famine and the bread baked in an unclean manner predict the horrors of famine in connection with the siege of Jerusalem, and how the people in the subsequent captivity among the Gentiles should live in defilement.

5. The Sign of Shaving the Head and Face: Chapter v:1–4. The sharp knife is the symbol of the King of Babylon. (See Isa. vii:20.) He was God's instrument in the execution of His wrath; the people are represented by the hair. The third part of the hair burned with fire pictures the fate of a part of the people during the siege. The pestilence and the famine were also to consume them. Only a few in number, a small remnant, were to be preserved, as indicated when Ezekiel took a few hairs and bound them in his skirt.

6. The Message of Denunciation: Verses 5–17. These solemn words should be carefully read. In connection with them there ought to be read Jeremiah's lamentations, for Jeremiah's outburst of sorrow shows the literal fulfillment of this message. (See Verse 10 and compare with Lamentations iv:10.)

7. The First Judgment Message: The Sword: Chapter vi. The mountains of Israel are mentioned first, because they were the places where the people practiced idolatry; they were the high places so often mentioned in the historical books. (Read Lev. xxvi:30–33.) Hundreds of years before, Moses wrote these words; and now they were all to be fulfilled. But the Lord also promised that a remnant should be left. That remnant would acknowledge the evil they had done. "They shall loathe themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations." The words "because I am broken with their whorish heart" mean, literally translated, "When I shall have broken their whorish heart which has departed from Me." No judgment which has ever come upon Israel made a complete end of the nation. A remnant always remained and returned to the

Lord. (See Rom. xi:5.) During the greatest and longest judgment which has come upon that nation, their world-wide dispersion during this present age, there is also a remnant still among them. When the Lord resumes His dealings with them during the last seven years of the times of the Gentiles, with which our age closes, a remnant from among them will turn to Him and be saved. That remnant will be carried through the judgments of the great tribulation and receive the promised kingdom.

8. The Second Judgment Message. The End is at Hand: Chapter vii. This chapter closes the first great message of Ezekiel. This great judgment message is written in beautiful language, which, in the authorized version, is marred by numerous, incorrect renderings. The reader will find a reliable metrical translation in our larger commentary on Ezekiel.

First, the end is announced to come upon the entire land; it could no longer be averted.

There is another day coming in which the Lord will deal in fearful judgments with this earth. Now is the day of salvation in which God speaks in love through His Son. When wickedness and apostasy has reached its climax, the day of salvation will end and "the day of vengeance of our God" will begin. Then He will speak in His wrath and vex them in His sore displeasure (Psa. ii:5). Then will they say to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. vi:16–17). God's judgments for the future are as sure as were His judgments in the past. There is a set time, the day of the Lord, when He, to whom the Father has given all judgments, will tread "the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of God, the Almighty" (Rev. xix:15).

Then follows a solemn description of the doom of Jerusalem and the reasons why such a judgment is executed.

III. VISIONS IN RELATION TO JERUSALEM.

CHAPTERS VIII-XI.

1. The Vision of Abomination in the Temple. Chapter viii.
2. The Vision of the Linen-Clothed Man with the Inkhorn. Chapter ix.
3. The Vision of the Coals of Fire. Chapter x.
4. The Vision Concerning the Leaders. The Glory Departs. Chapter xi.

1. The Vision of Abomination in the Temple: Chapter viii. This vision shows the abomination which prevailed in the Temple of Jehoah.

In the visions of God, Ezekiel is brought to the door of the inner gate that looks to the north. Here was the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy. Some have taken this and the following visions to be retrospective. It has been said, "It was as if he were translated back to Jerusalem, and to the time when these things were occurring." Such is the view of some critics; however, it is untenable. These visions would lose their meaning if the prophet seemed to be translated back to Jerusalem and to the time when these abominations had happened in Israel's past history. Later we find the names of persons given, whom he saw. They certainly were living persons known to the prophet Ezekiel and his contemporaries. One of them died while Ezekiel prophesied (xi:13).

What was the image of jealousy which provoketh to jealousy? It was an idol. The word is used in Deut. iv:16, where it is translated "graven image." It is also found in 2 Chron. xxxiii:7, 15, where it refers to the idol, which Manasseh had made and put up in the temple.

After Manasseh's idolatry came Josiah's great reformation. After his death, Judah plunged into greater wickedness under the reign of wicked kings, and a revival of idolatry followed once more. Such a wrath-provoking idol was beheld by the prophet. This image they worshipped. "Son of man, seest thou what they do?" They must have lain pros-

trate before that idol. And yet the glory of the God of Israel was still there.

That there will be a similar scene enacted in a future temple, during the great tribulation, is well known to all students of prophecy. (See 2 Thess. ii and Rev. xiii.)

The Prophet saw creeping things and beasts worshipped; the elders and the people were practising Egyptian idolatry of the most degrading kind. Jaazaniah, the son of Shaphan, is especially mentioned. Shaphan was the scribe, who received from the high priest, Hilkiah, the book of the law, and read it before King Josiah (2 Kings xxii:8–11; Jer. xxxix:14). The son of this God-fearing scribe was the leader of the idolators. And these idol worshippers, each in his chamber of imagery (probably individual cells), said: "The Lord seeth us not; the Lord has forsaken the earth." They denied His omniscience and omnipresence. The apostasy in Christendom is going the same road.

The women wept for Tammuz, the Babylonian "Dumuzi," the god of spring, who dies, and revives each year. It was a vile, obscene cult, for with the worship of Tammuz were connected immoral, licentious ceremonies. Sun-worship was the crown of all these abominations. (See verses 16–18).

2. The Vision of the Linen-clothed Man with the Inkhorn. Chapter ix. The six men mentioned are angels, into whose hands the city is given. Angels are used in judgments past and future. (See Matt. xiii:41; xvi:27; 2 Thess. i:7–8). Angels are likewise prominently mentioned in the Book of Revelation. There is a striking correspondency between this chapter and Revelation vii:1–3. Those who sigh and weep constitute the remnant which have no sympathy with the abominations. They are marked for preservation. Thus a remnant was then kept. Well may we remember that now, in the professing church, in the midst of the apostasy, there is also a faithful remnant who sigh and cry and who have the special promise of the Lord (Rev. iii:10).

The word "mark" in the Hebrew is "Tav," the last letter in the Hebrew alphabet. Its literal meaning is "cross." This letter "T" was a cross in the older Hebrew script as well as

in the Phoenician and Samaritan. The Egyptians also used a cross in their language, with them it was a sign of life. Ancient Jewish tradition gives the information that the blood sprinkled in Egypt on the doorpost (Exod. xii:23) was in the form of a cross. All this is interesting. To this we may add that in Gen. iv:15, the mark set upon Cain, an entirely different word is used.

Then the command was literally executed.

3. The Vision of the Coals of Fire: Chapter x. Once more the Glory vision appears. The linen clothed man who had done the marking in the previous chapter is now executing judgment. Who is He? Evidently more than an angel. That he is a supernatural being is clear. He held the place of pre-eminence among the other angels (chapter ix:2–4). This angel is the Angel of the Lord, the same who appeared to the Patriarchs, to Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Manoah, and to others. It is the Son of God in the garb of an angel. In the same form he also appeared to Daniel on the banks of the river Hiddekel. "Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz. His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in color to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude" (Dan. x:5–6). Here we have a complete description of the same person whom Ezekiel saw taking the coals of fire and scattering them over Jerusalem. Judgment upon the guilty city came from His hands.

When we turn to the Book of Revelation, we find a similar scene which has not yet been enacted. A careful comparison of this scene here with Rev. viii:3–5 is suggested. This angel who presents the prayers before the throne and who casts the judgment fires on the earth is the same who received the seven sealed Book (Rev. v:1). It is the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then the Glory of the Lord departed from the threshold

of the temple; over its portals "Ichabod" (the glory is departed) was now to be written.

4. The Vision Concerning the Leaders. The Glory Departs: Chapter xi. The priests and the leaders of the nation were steeped in wickedness, defied God and the judgments His prophets had announced. They devised mischief (or iniquity) and gave wicked counsel. Their wicked counsel consisted in disobedience against Jehovah and His Word. In regard to the judgment they said, "It is not the time to build houses; this is the cauldron and we are the flesh." They knew of Jeremiah's letter which he had sent to the elders who were carried away captives. In that letter, Jeremiah, believing God's Word concerning the long duration of the captivity, gave the advice, "Build ye houses and dwell in them" (Jer. xxix). They ridiculed that divinely given advice. They still thought themselves safe in Jerusalem. The phrase "this is the cauldron" means the city of Jerusalem; and we are the "flesh" themselves. As the flesh in the cauldron is preserved from the fire by the cauldron itself, so they felt themselves secure in the doomed city. That these wicked leaders were still in the city shows that the judgment in chapter ix was not a complete judgment. It began at the sanctuary, and the wicked worshippers Ezekiel saw in his vision were smitten first of all, while the man with the inkhorn marked the entire remnant for preservation. Then the Spirit fell upon Ezekiel and he uttered Jehovah's message.

The message of judgment is followed by a message of Mercy. Verses 14–21 are yet to be fulfilled in that nation. The final departure of the visible Glory of the Lord concludes this chapter. It held its ascension from the Mount of Olives. From the same place, He who is the Lord of Glory and reveals the Glory of the Lord, went back to the Father. And when He returns "His feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives" (Zech. xiv). It will be at that blessed time when Israel and Jerusalem will behold the return of the Glory, which Ezekiel beheld departing from city and temple.

IV. SIGNS, MESSAGES AND PARABLES.

CHAPTERS XII-XIX.

1. Signs Given Through the Prophet. Chapter xii:1-20.
2. The Message of Speedy Judgment. 21-28.
3. The Message Against False Prophets and Prophetess. Chapter xiii.
4. The Message Against the Elders. Chapter xiv.
5. The Parable of the Vine Given to the Fire. Chapter xv.
6. The Parable of the Abandoned Child and Israel's Whoredom. Chapter xvi.
7. The Parable of the Riddle of the Two Eagles and the Vine. Chapter xvii.
8. The Message of the Righteous judgments of God. Chapter xviii.
9. The Lamentations for the Princes of Israel. Chapter xix.

With the twelfth chapter a new section of this book begins, ending with chapter xix.

1. Signs Given Through the Prophet: Chapter xii:1–20. They were a rebellious house and the Prophet is told to do something, that they might consider. He was to attire himself like one who goes on a journey with sandals on his feet, a staff in his hand, a burden on his shoulder. He was told to move from place to place. The meaning of all this is explained in verses 8–16. The prince in Jerusalem is Zedekiah. His attempt to flee from Jerusalem, and his fate of having his eyes put out by the King of Babylon, his captivity and death are here clearly predicted. The following passages must be read and studied in connection with this chapter (Jer. xxxix:4, lii:10–11; 2 Kings xxv:1–7).

2. The Message of Speedy Judgment: Verses 21–28. The false prophets had preached a false hope, "The days are prolonged and every vision faileth." God had announced another message. Had they believed what God had spoken, that judgment was imminent, they would have surely repented and turned unto the Lord. Unbelief was responsible for their condition; in this they were sustained by lying prophets. And the Lord answered these false prophets. He

changed the lying message and told them "the days are at hand"—the effect of every vision. All false visions, divinations and hopes were to cease. His Word is now to be done.

3. The Message Against False Prophets and Prophetesses: Chapter xiii. And now the Lord speaks through Ezekiel about the false prophets in the midst of His people. They prophesied out of their own hearts; or as it might be rendered, "Who prophesy from their own mind without having seen." Such they were and such are the false teachers of this present age (2 Peter ii:1–2). Of such our Lord warned: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you is sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matt. vii:5). Every man who prophesies out of his own heart, who utters his own mind, whose preaching and teaching is not according to the oracles of God, is a false prophet, a blind leader of the blind. Like false prophets in Israel the false teachers in Christendom are the cause of the spiritual condition of the professing people of God. Of all such it is true what the Lord said through Ezekiel: "They have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, "The Lord saith, and the Lord has not sent them." They are self-called and self-sent. Behind them stands the father of lies (1 Kings xxii:19–23; 1 Tim. iv:1). Next we find in verses 8–16 their condemnation and punishment. But there were also false women prophets; they practised occultism.

All this is also done in the very midst of Christendom in the twentieth century. Women prophets, the most subtle instruments of Satan, are plentiful in these days. The fact has often been pointed out that the prominent leaders in the evil cults of the last days are women. There has been a strange modern-day revival of occult practices upon Christian ground. Spiritualism, Theosophy, and Christian Science belong to this class. All three started with women. Spiritualism with its mediums, fortune-tellers and necromancers is almost entirely in the hands of women, who claim to be religious leaders. The same is true of Theosophy, with its Hindu philosophy, and occultism, surrounded with

an air of unholy mysticism. Christian Science is closely related to these two cults. Its founder practised for a time the calling of a medium.

Significant is the description of their evil testimony as given in verse 22.

4. The Message Against the Elders: Chapter xiv. These inquiring elders, with wickedness in their hearts, give another illustration of the depth of degradation in which the people had sunken. He who searches the hearts knew what was in them. They came with pious, religious pretensions. It sounded well to inquire of the Lord and seek the prophet-priest for that purpose Their hearts were full of evil. While their lips spoke of asking the Lord, their hearts were full of idolatry. They liked idolatry. Their hearts were in it and this stumbling-block of their inquity they had put before their faces, which means they openly defied the Lord God of Israel by their doings. "Should I be inquired of at all by them?" To seek the Lord and inquire of Him in such a condition reveals a brazen spirit and the deepest depravity. Yet this also belongs to the conditions in which the professing people of God are when judgment overtakes them.

Verses 12–23 contain an additional judgment message. The threatened judgment cannot be averted; it is unavoidable. Famine is to come and the noisome beasts, symbolical of Gentile world powers, as Daniel beheld them in his vision (Dan. vii). The judgment message closes again with a message of mercy and comfort for the remnant.

5. The Parable of the Vine Given to the Fire: Chapter xv. This is the first of three parables to demonstrate still further the delusion of their false hope that deliverance would come. The vine is a type of Israel (Psa. lxxx:8–12. See also Isa. v:1–6 and Hosea x:1.) The vine is only good for one thing, which is the bearing of fruit; apart from this it is worthless. The wood cannot be used for anything whatever. It is good for nothing but burning. Nebuchadnezzar carried out this sentence (2 Kings xxv:9). It reminds us also of the parable of the vine our Lord spoke, in which, speaking of the unfruitful branch, He said, "Men gather

them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned" (John xv:6). Some apply this also to Israel; it means the professing believer, who professes to be a branch in the true vine.

6. The Parable of the Abandoned Child and Jerusalem's Whoredom: Chapter xvi. This chapter consists of four sections: 1. The Parable of the abandoned child. 2. Jerusalem's idolatries and moral degradation (verses 15–34). 3. The Doom of Jerusalem and the promise of Restoration (verses 35–59). 4. The covenant remembered (verses 60–63).

The parable of the abandoned child, and what the gracious Lord did for the little one is a most beautiful demonstration of what He had done in His sovereign love and grace for Jerusalem. It must be read first with this in mind. But this sweet parable illustrates also, as few other portions in the Old Testament do, the grace which the Lord bestows upon the believer in the Gospel. Thy father an Amorite and thy mother a Hittite reminds us of what is true of all men, so tersely expressed in David's confession, "Behold I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psa. li:5). Like the child pictured in the parable, we are lost, perishing in the field (the world). What could that perishing child do to save itself? Even so we cannot do anything to save ourselves. The Lord passing by had compassion and spoke His Word of power—Live. He came from heaven to this earth, into the field to seek and save what is lost. He found man in the vile and helpless condition so aptly pictured by the miserable child. And more than that, He died to save man. He gave His life so that we might live. The first thing He does for the believing sinner is to give him life. When the spiritual dead hear His voice they live. The washing with water, the anointing with oil (type of the Holy Spirit), the announcement "thou becamest mine," as well as the clothing, the beautifying and the crowning, all illustrates what His marvelous grace does for the trusting, believing sinner. It is all grace from start to finish, from the impartation of life in the new birth to the crowning in glory.

Upon this beautiful background of Jehovah's love and mercy, there is written next the dark picture of Jerusalem's whoredom's, symbolical of her wicked idolatries. It started all with pride (verse 15). Jerusalem did not acknowledge the giver. Instead of worshipping Him, they established the high places and conformed to all the wicked Canaanitish practices. Verses 15–34 give the depth of Jerusalem's apostasy.

Then the Lord addresseth her whom He loved, and who had turned away from Him as a harlot. Her doom and judgment is announced which once more is followed by the promise of mercy and restoration. The restoration of Sodom and her daughters has puzzled many. It has been used by Universalists, Russellites, Restorationists, teachers of Reconciliationism and other errorists to back up their inventions of a second chance of the wicked dead, or the ultimate salvation of the entire race. The restoration promises have nothing to do with the restoration of the wicked dead. They are promises of national restoration. It is a mistake to look in the Old Testament for any doctrines concerning the future state. Three facts will show this error of making the Old Testament teach the restoration of the wicked.

I. The Old Testament is not that part of the divine Revelation where teachings and doctrines about the future state are given.

This is a most important fact. The Old Testament shows man as upon the earth, on this side of death, and not beyond death. The future of Israel on the earth, their supremacy and destiny of glory amidst the nations of the earth, the judgments of God in the earth, as well as the future blessings for the nations inhabiting the earth during the coming age, are all clearly revealed in the Old Testament. The state after death, that which is beyond this life, is shrouded in mystery in the Old Testament Scriptures. That great judgment, the great white throne judgment, is nowhere mentioned in the Old Testament, nor do we read a word there of "the second death." Resurrection of the dead, no

doubt, was known to individual saints of Old Testament times; the Spirit of God revealed it to their hearts, but as a doctrine, resurrection is not found in the Old Testament. In Psalm xvi is revealed the hope of resurrection of the body, and there is a prophecy of the resurrection of our Lord.

II. Should we find anything in the Old Testament concerning the future state, the state of the righteous and the unrighteous after death, such a hint or statement can only be rightly understood and interpreted by the great doctrine concerning the future state as revealed in the New Testament.

By this, of course, we do not say that the Old Testament needs correction by the revelation of the New, nor do we say that the Old is inferior to the New; all *is* the Word of God. However, as the Old Testament does not show man's condition after death, any passage which appears to relate to such a condition must be interpreted by the full light as given in the New Testament.

III. If such passages as Ezekiel xvi:53 *and Ezekiel xxxvii*:1–14, *etc., teach the restitution of the wicked by resurrection for another chance, we must then find such a doctrine of the restoration most clearly and fully revealed as one of the great doctrines of the New Testament.*

In vain, however, do we look in the New Testament for such a restoration—second probation doctrine. Such a doctrine is not even hinted at in the New. However, the New Testament gives the fullest revelation concerning resurrection and the future state. It tells us that there is indeed a resurrection of the body for every human being. This revelation of resurrection as contained in the New Testament leaves no room whatever for the Sodomites and all the wicked idolatrous Israelites to be raised up for another chance. Our Lord, in John v:29, reveals a twofold resurrection, a resurrection unto life and a resurrection unto damnation. The human race, those who have died, are therefore in resurrection divided into two classes; they must come forth either unto life or unto damnation: there is no middle class. Later the New Testament teaches a first resurrection, an out-resurrection from the dead. Only

those who have believed and died in Christ will have a share in this resurrection. Both Old and New Testament saints belong to it, but none have a part in it who died in their sins. The rest of the dead, meaning of course, the wicked dead, are not raised up till after the thousand years. This is a second resurrection, and this takes place not when the Lord comes the second time, but after His millennial reign (Rev. xx). The subjects of this second resurrection appear before the great white throne and are cast into the lake of fire. Now, these teachers claim that the return of Sodom and Samaria to their former estate means their resurrection for another chance when the Lord comes. But, as these departed, wicked people are wicked still, how can they have part in the first resurrection when the Lord comes, which is the resurrection of the righteous?

They surely cannot belong to this resurrection. And there is nowhere in the New Testament a word about another special resurrection in which all the wicked are raised from the dead for another chance. After the resurrection of the righteous dead there is but one more resurrection, the resurrection of the wicked unto damnation. In the light of these facts the flimsy theory built upon misapplied texts of the Old Testament, texts which relate to national restoration and blessing, breaks down completely. And now, having seen what the statements in this chapter of Ezekiel do not mean, let us see what is their meaning. While these statements cannot mean the resurrection of individuals, they mean a *national* restoration. There is promised in many passages of the Old Testament a national restoration of Israel. The ten tribes are to be brought back to their former possessions. Historically they have been lost. But they are not lost to God. He knows where they are. He has kept track of them, and in His own time He will make good the promises of their restoration and will bring back the remnants of the house of Israel, now scattered still among the nations. The Jews will also be restored to their territory. Repeatedly this national restoration of the ancient people is promised under the picture of a resurrection. But

to other nations there is also promised such a national restoration in the days to come, when the Lord comes and begins His Kingdom reign over the earth. Such a national revival is beyond a doubt promised for a future day to Moab, Ammon, Assyria and Egypt. Edom and Babylon, however, are doomed as nations and no revival whatever is promised to them.

We do not know, of course, how God will accomplish these promises of restoration and national revivals, and how He will gather the remnants of these former nations from the great sea of nations. We can leave this and other difficulties with Him who will see to the fulfillment of all these things.

7. The Parable of the Two Eagles, the Cedar and the Vine: Chapter xvii. The great eagle mentioned first is Nebuchadnezzar. (See Jer. xlviii:40 and xlix:22). He came to Lebanon and took the highest branch of the cedar, the symbol of the house of David, which was conquered by this eagle. Nebuchadnezzar made the youngest son of Josiah king over Judah and called him Zedekiah. This action is described in verse 5. The other great eagle is Hophra, the king of Egypt. To him Zedekiah turned for help. The interpretation and application of this parable is given in verses 11–21. The following passages should be read as helpful to the understanding of these verses: 2 Chron. xxxvi:13; Jer. xxvii:1–2, xxxvii:5–7, lii:11.

Israel's hope and Israel's future come once more into view in verses 22–24. The cedar is the royal house of David. God in His sovereignty promises to take "of its young shoots a tender one and I will plant it upon a high and eminent mountain." This tender one is the Messiah, the Son of David. It is the same promise as given in the Prophet Isaiah. "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots" (Isa. xi:1). "For He shall grow up before him as a tender plant and as a root out of a dry ground" (Isa. liii:2). The high and eminent mountain typifies Mount Zion, and the Kingdom of Messiah is pictured in the closing verses of the chapter. The high tree which is brought low, the green

tree which is dried up, is the symbol of Gentile world-power. The low tree which is exalted and the dry tree which is made to flourish stands for the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel when the Son of David, our Lord, comes again. Then the high tree will be cut down and the now flourishing Gentile dominion will dry up; Israel the low tree will be exalted, and the long, dry and barren nation will bring its blessed fruit.

8. The Message of the Righteous Judgments of God: Chapter xviii. In verses 1–4, we find the false accusation against God and the Divine answer, and this is followed in verses 5–9 by the conditions of life, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (verse 4). But the conditions to have life and to be just cannot be fulfilled by sinful man; nor is in these verses "eternal life" in view; these are not conditions to secure "eternal life," but to escape physical death in the announced judgment. The conditions which bring death are given in verses 10–13. The son does not die for his father's sins, as they thought in their wrong reasonings (verses 14–02)· All their accusations that the Lord is unjust are completely answered in the final paragraph of this message (verses 21–32).

9. The Lamentations for the Princes of Israel: Chapter xix. This lamentation has two sections. The lamentations for the princes come first (i:9), and that is followed by the lamentation for the land of Judah (10–14).

The princes are Jehoahaz and Jehoiachin. King Jehoahaz was carried away captive into Egypt (2 Kings xxiii:33); his fate is lamented in verses 1–4. King Jehoiachin was taken to Babylon and he is lamented in verses 5–9. In the lamentation for the land of Judah the vine is once more mentioned. The vine is burned, the fruit devoured and there is no scepter in Judah.

V. FURTHER AND FINAL PREDICTIONS CONCERNING THE JUDGMENT OF JERUSALEM.

CHAPTERS XX-XXIV.

1. Jehovah Rehearses His Mercies Bestowed Upon Israel. Chapter xx.
2. The Impending Judgment Announced. Chapter xxi.
3. Jerusalem's Sins and Whoredom. Chapters xxii-xxiii.
4. The Parable of the Boiling Pot. The Last Word. Chapter xxiv.

1. Jehovah Rehearses His Mercies Bestowed Upon Israel: Chapter xx. The chapter contains a Divine retrospect and an arraignment of the people for their national sins. The following division will greatly assist in an analytical study of this chapter. Verses 1–9 describes the nation's sins in Egypt. Verses 10–17 give the history of the first generation which came out of Egypt. It is a wonderful condensed rehearsal of all they were and what the Lord had done for them. The record of the second generation is contained in verses 18–26. This is followed by a description of their unfaithfulness and sins in the land (verses 27–32). Judgment then is announced and a future restoration promised. Verses 40–44 are yet to be fulfilled. The fire of judgment to sweep over the south field (Judah) is announced in the final paragraph (verses 45–49).

2. The Announcement of the Impending Judgment: Chapter xxi. A solemn message is given to the prophet: "Behold I am against thee, and will draw forth my sword out of its sheath, and will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked." It was to be a widespread judgment, against all flesh. Ezekiel was commanded to sigh with bitterness before their eyes and was to tell them the cause of his grief (verses 1–7). The sharpening of the sword of judgment is given in verses 8–17. It was hanging over their heads, ready to strike at any moment. The question is asked, "Should we then make mirth?" Is this the time of mirth, worldly pleasures and enjoyment? Not for the faithful in Israel. Nor is the present solemn time a time of mirth for those who

know the signs of the times and what God has revealed concerning things to come.

The King of Babylon and his divination is vividly pictured in verses 18–24. The Babylonians used different kinds of enchantments, etc., to ascertain what they should do. The king stands at the cross-roads. Shall he go to Rabbath or against Jerusalem? He used arrows and put on one the name of "Rabbath" of the Ammonites; on the other "Jerusalem." Then he shook them to and fro (correct rendering—"he made his arrows bright"). In verse 22, we see the result of this divination. He has in his hands the arrow with "Jerusalem" on it.

The Wicked Prince and the Coming One are seen in verses 25–27. Here Christ and Antichrist are contrasted. There can be no question that Zedekiah is first of all in view as the profane wicked prince of Israel. But the prophecy looks far beyond Zedekiah. It is the coming wicked prince, the one who comes in his own name, the final Antichrist, the false Messiah, or, as he is also called in Revelation, the false prophet. That verse 25 refers to the time of the end, is seen by the words, "in the time of the iniquity of the end" (correct translation. The same phrase appears in Dan. xi:35–39, "the time of the end," and the person described in that passage is the Antichrist, the wicked prince. It is the time of the future great tribulation "when the transgressors are come to the full" (Dan. viii:23). This false Christ will claim priestly and kingly honors. He is the beast out of the earth, (Rev. xiii) having two horns like a lamb, but speaking as a dragon. The two horns represent the priesthood and the kingship he assumes. And this, we learn from verse 26, is the character of the wicked prince of Israel of whom Ezekiel speaks. Again, we must correct the faulty translation of the authorized version: "Remove the mitre and take off the crown"; the word "diadem" is mitre, the head-dress of the high-priest (Exod. xxvii:4). He wears the mitre of the priest and the crown of the king. He is Satan's final counterfeit (like the pope) of the Priest-King. In verse 27, the overturning times are mentioned. Thrice it is stated, "I

will overturn." Even so will it be at the time of the end until He comes whose right it is.

Verses 28–32 give the announcement of judgment upon the Ammonites.

3. Jerusalem's Sins and Whoredoms: Chapters xxii-xxiii. Before the sharpened sword of justice and retribution does its dreadful work, the Lord uncovers the guilt and vileness of the city and lays bare the corruption of her prophets, priest, and princes, as well as of the people. The violence and abomination of Jerusalem are revealed in verses 1–16; the smelting furnace in verses 17–23 is the symbol of Jehovah's fiery indignation against Jerusalem and its inhabitants. The corruption of the prophets, priests, and princes is fully uncovered in the closing section of chapter xxii (verses 23–31).

In chapter xxiii Samaria and Jerusalem are called two sisters, Aholah and Aholibah, in their ungodly relation with Assyria and Chaldea. Aholah means "her tent." Aholibah, "my tent is in her." The latter denotes the fact that the true sanctuary was in Judah. The sins and vileness of both are portrayed throughout this long chapter, as well as the deserved punishment.

4. The Parable of the Boiling Pot and the Last Word: Chapter xxiv. The exact date is given by the prophet. It was the tenth day of the tenth month in the ninth year. What happened also on that date we find recorded in 2 Kings xxv:1: "And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, came, he and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it; and they built forts against it round about." How did Ezekiel know about all this? It was the Lord who gave him this information and led him to record the date. This is the statement of the second verse: "Son of man, write thee the name of the day, even of this selfsame day, the King of Babylon set himself against Jerusalem this same day." What does Higher Criticism have to say to this? We quote a recent commentator: "These verses (2) forces on us in the clearest fashion the

dilemma—either Ezekiel was a deliberate deceiver or he was possessed of some kind of a second sight!" What about divine revelation? This the "learned"(?) men refuse to think even possible. The boiling pot announced is the symbol of Jerusalem.

Verses 15–18 announce the death of Ezekiel's wife, and he is commanded not to mourn or weep; all the customary signs of grief are forbidden him. While he faithfully delivered the Message in the morning, even his wife was taken from his side. Death had dissolved the marriage union and taken from the prophet the beloved wife. Even so the relationship between Jehovah and Jerusalem was now completely to be severed. The question of the people and the answer is found in verses 19–27. Read verses 26–27 and compare with chapter xxxiii:21, 22.

B. PREDICTIONS OF JUDGMENTS AGAINST THE NATIONS.

CHAPTERS XXV-XXXII.

1. Prophecies Concerning Ammon, Moab, Edom, and the Philistines. xxv.
2. Concerning Tyrus. Chapter xxvi.
3. The Glory of Tyrus and Her Fall. Chapter xxvii.
4. The Prince of Tyrus. Chapter xxviii.
5. Concerning Egypt. Chapters xxix and xxx.
6. Pharaoh's Greatness and His Overthrow. Chapter xxxi.
7. Lamentations and the Great Funeral Dirge. Chapter xxxii.

1. Prophecies Concerning Ammon, Moab, Edom, and the Philistines: Chapter xxv. The eight chapters as analyzed above are on prophecies concerning nations which were in touch with Israel. These predictions concern seven nations, and these are divided into four and three. The first four were the immediate neighbors of Israel. The first message concerns the Ammonites (verses 1–7). Both Ammon and Moab had a racial connection with Israel and were the incestous offspring of Lot (Gen. xxxvii:37–38). They were in constant conflict with Israel. Their evil character is

revealed in this message. Moab is mentioned next (verses 8–11). We give several passages which may be consulted about Moab and the character of the people (Jer. xlviii:29; Isa. xvi:6). There is promised for both Ammon and Moab a national restoration in the latter days, that is, when the Lord comes (Jer. xlviii:47, xlix:6). Let us remember that these nations were proud in the extreme. And these judgments upon proud, self-exalting, God-forgetting nations, are not confined to the past. They will be repeated in the future when He will judge the nations.

Verses 12–14 concern Edom. The descendants of Esau, Edom, were closer to Israel than Ammon and Moab. Edom's deeds were more prominently against the people of God, more wicked and defiant, than the others. Israel was especially commanded not to abhor an Edomite (Deut. xxiii:7). Amos shows the sin of Edom (Amos i:11). So does Obadiah (verses 3–4). The cruel Herods, the types of the man of sin, were Edomites. The judgment upon Edom is to be executed by Israel. This is to take place in a future day. (See Obadiah, verses 17–21 and Amos ix:11–12.) The final paragraph is concerning the Philistines (verses 15–17). The Philistines dwelt on a narrow strip on the seashore and were the long continued enemies of the people Israel. Jeremiah speaks of them (chapter cxlvii). See also Amos i:6–9, Joel iii:4; Isa. xix:29–32. The vengeance of the Lord fell upon the coast of Palestina, the Philistines, and they experienced the fury of the Lord. He dealt with them who had corrupted His people. And so God will deal in due time with all His enemies.

2. **Concerning Tyrus: Chapter xxvi.** A lengthy prophecy concerning Tyrus is found in this and in the chapters which follow. These great predictions have found a startling fulfilment. History confirms all that Ezekiel spoke should come to pass. In verses 1–14 we have the overthrow of the powerful city predicted.

The City of Tyrus (which means rock) was partly built upon an island off the mainland in the Mediterranean Sea. It was an ancient Phoenician city and is mentioned in Scrip-

ture for the first time in Joshua xix:29, where it is called "The strong city." It had a wonderful commerce, a description of which in its variety, we find in the twenty-seventh chapter. It was inhabited by seafaring men, and the prophet Isaiah describes this wealthy and influential city as "the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honorable of the earth" (Isa. xxiii:8). We read in the next chapter how Syria, Persia, Egypt, Spain, Greece and every quarter of the ancient world laid their choicest and most precious things at the feet of Tyre, who sat enthroned on ivory, covered with blue and purple, from the isles of Elishah. Her beauty was perfect (Ezek. xxvii:11). During the reign of David and Solomon, Tyre came into great prominence, playing an important role in the commercial, political and religious history of Israel. Hiram, King of Tyrus, sent cedar trees to Jerusalem, as well as workmen, who built David a house (2 Sam. v:11). How Tyrus aided in the construction of the temple and the palace under Solomon's reign, may be learned by consulting the following passages: 1 Kingsv:1–12, vii:13–14; 1 Chron. xiv:1, 2 Chron. ii:3, 11. When the ships of Solomon sailed away to Ophir, "Hiram sent in the navy his servants, ship-men that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon, and they came to Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought it to King Solomon" (1 Kings ix:27–28). She sinned against Jerusalem and the people of God. Joel and Amos, Isaiah and Jeremiah mention her and her well deserved judgment (Joel iii:4–6; Amos i:9–10; Isa. xxiii; Jer. xlvii:4).

In the third verse of our chapter, we read the divine announcement of Tyre's fate: "Behold I am against three, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causes its waves to come up. And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers; I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock." It was to become a place for the spreading of nets and a spoil to the nations. This great judgment was not all at once carried out. Nebuchadnezzar came first

against her as predicted in verses 7–11. He besieged Tyre on the mainland and after thirteen years took the city; while that part of Tyrus which was built upon the island in the sea, protected by the fleet of Tyrus, escaped. Then came for her seventy years when she was forgotten, as predicted by Isaiah (xxiii:15). After these years had passed Tyrus saw a startling revival. The island city became more powerful and wicked than before; "she committed fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth" (Isa. xxiii:17). The continental Tyrus, however, remained in ruins.

Centuries passed and it seemed as if Ezekiel's prophecy concerning Tyre's complete overthrow would remain unfulfilled. It was about 240 years after when the literal fulfilment of this prophecy was accomplished. Alexander the Great came against the city built on the island. After seven months the city was taken by means of a mole, by which the forces of Alexander could enter the city. In constructing this mole, Alexander made use of the ruins of the old city. The stones, timber and the very dust of the destroyed city was laid into the sea to erect the causeway which accomplished the utter ruin of the wealthy city. And thus Ezekiel's prophecy was fulfilled. "And they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water." The complete end of Tyrus had come. "And thou shalt be no more, though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again" (verse 21). So completely was the work done by Alexander, depositing the debris of the ruins of Tyrus on the mainland into the sea, that its exact site will remain undeterminable. And Alexander the Great fulfilled still another prophecy. Before he came on his mission, directed by God, to make an end of the proud and wicked city, Zechariah, the great post-exilic prophet, had once more announced the fate of Tyrus. "And Tyrus," said the Lord through Zechariah, "did build herself a stronghold, and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the ruin of the sheets." This was after Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed the Tyrus on the mainland and she became the great island

city. "Thus," said Zechariah, "behold, the Lord will cast her out, and He will smite her power in the sea, and she shall be devoured with fire" (Zech. ix:3–4). Alexander did this: he laid proud Tyrus in ashes. What an evidence that all these words are Divine!

The effect of the fall of Tyrus and a lamentation over that fall are revealed in verses 15–21. There is a description of the descent of Tyrus into the pit (verses 19–20). The last sentence of verse 20, "And I shall set glory in the land of the living," means the coming glory of the earthly Zion, the glory in store for Israel.

3. The Glory of Tyrus and Her Fall: Chapter xxvii. Verses 1–25 give an interesting description of the world-wide commerce and glory of this proud world city. "Sic transit gloria mundi," thus passeth the glory of the world! Of the proud and wicked mistress of the sea nothing but ruins remain and her very site is no longer known. What her past glory was is made known by the prophet, yet Ezekiel never had been to that city, nor did he have any knowledge of her grandeur, her great wealth and far reaching commerce. God revealed all unto him.

The description of her great commerce reminds us of that coming world-system as described in the last Book of the Bible, the Revelation. Babylon the Great will be both an ecclesiastical and commercial world center. Her commerce is just like the commerce of Tyrus (Rev. xviii:12–13). The fall of Tyrus is fully given in verses 26–30.

The description of Tyrus as a ship as given in the first part of this chapter is here maintained. Tyrus is to be shipwrecked. The east wind is Nebuchadnezzar, who came against the proud city to accomplish part of her ruin; and Alexander the Great, as we saw in our previous study, completed the work. A comparison with Revelation xviii will bring out the striking correspondency. When finally Babylon the great falls, that coming religious-commercial world-system, with Rome as a center, her fall and desolation, will surely be greater than the fall of Tyrus. For this all is rapidly preparing.

4. The Prince of Tyrus: Chapter xxviii. The prince of Tyrus, or, as he is also called, the King, was, according to the Jewish historian Josephus, Ithobalus, known in the Phoenician annals as Ithobaal II. He was the consummation of the pride and wealth of Tyrus; the terrible pride of the city headed up in him. His heart was so lifted up that he claimed to be a god and that he occupied the very seat of God. He boasted of greater wisdom than the wisdom of Daniel. He is a type of the final Antichrist, the man of sin. Behind the wicked prince and king, there is seen another power, Satan. Satan was the power behind the throne of the Tyrian King, as Satan is still the god of this age, who controls the kingdoms of the world. Inasmuch, then, as Tyrus is a type of the commercial glory of the world, its wealth and pride, foreshadowing the final great world-city or world-system, Babylon, the ruler of Tyrus, spoken of as Prince, foreshadows the Antichrist; while as King, Satan himself stands behind him as the dominereing power. The descriptions given of Satan as an unfallen being show that he was originally a marvelous being, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. From Jude's epistle, we learn that even Michael still recognized in him the grandeur of his unfallen past, and did not bring a railing accusation against him (Jude verses 8–10). He was in Eden, the garden of God, and every precious stone was his covering. It is a description of Satan's original place and of his great beauty. Furthermore, he was the anointed cherub that covereth; the Lord had set him to be this. As the anointed, divinely chosen cherub he held an exalted position in connection with the government of the throne of God. Everything shows that this majestic creature possessed a place of great dignity, being "upon the holy mountain of God," walking up and down in the midst of the stones of fire, he was ever present and moving about in the fiery glory of a holy and righteous God. "Thou was perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created till unrighteousness was found in thee."

In verses 20–26 the judgment upon Zidon, some twenty miles north of Tyrus, is predicted. For some years Zidon

was even more prominent than Tyrus. She was burnt after a revolt against Artaxerxes Ochus in 351 B.C., but later rebuilt.

5. Concerning Egypt: Chapters xxix and xxx. First Egypt's desolation is announced (verses 1–12). The King of Egypt addressed in this prophecy was Pharaoh-Hophra, called in Greek, Apries. He was the grandson of Pharaoh-Necho, who defeated King Josiah at Meggido (2 Chron. xxxv:20–27). King Zedekiah of Judah expected help and relief from Pharaoh-Hophra, when Jerusalem was besieged. The Egyptian army under Hophra advanced through Phoenicia and forced the Chaldeans to raise the siege of Jerusalem (Jer. xxxv:5–7). But the relief was only temporary, for the Egyptian army had to retire. The prophet Jeremiah announced also the doom of Hophra, associating it with Zedekiah's doom: "Thus saith the Lord, Behold I will give Pharaoh-Hophra, King of Egypt, into the hands of his enemies, and into the hand of them that seek his life; as I gave Zedekiah, King of Judah, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, his enemy, and that sought his life" (Jer. xliv:30).

But have these predictions been fulfilled? Did Egypt pass through a period of forty years' desolation and did a restoration take place after the forty years? Critics claim that these predictions were never literally fulfilled and that Nebuchadnezzar did not invade Egypt during the reign of Hophra. They point to the historical evidence that Amasis followed Hophra as King of Egypt, and under his reign Egypt was in a very flourishing condition. The historian, Herodotus, gives this information, and it is fully confirmed by Egyptian records on monuments. But did the prophet Ezekiel predict that Egypt should be invaded by Nebuchadnezzar during the reign of Pharaoh-Hophra? His predictions of disaster for Israel by trusting in Egypt had been used by the Assyrian officer in addressing Hezekiah: "Now, behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, upon Egypt, on which, if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it; so is Pharaoh, King of Egypt, unto all that trust on

him" (2 Kings xviii:21). And so it was. Egypt gave no help to Israel and only wounded them grievously, as a staff which breaks under the weight of him who leaneth upon it breaks and pierces the hand. Whenever God's people turn to Egypt (the type of the world) for help, and form ungodly alliances, they do so to their own hurt and shame.

Verses 13–16 predict a future restoration of Egypt. Isaiah also shows its future history, both in judgment and in blessing (chapter xix). Yet the prediction of Ezekiel that Egypt after the forty years should be restored and be the basest of all kingdoms and shall have no more rule, but be in a diminished condition, excludes the appl cation of this prophecy to the coming Millennium. Egypt had such a period of forty years' devastation, though the exact history of it may not be known to us. Prophecy is not learned by historical events, but history is revealed in prophecy. We believe prophecies, not because history has measured up to them, but we believe them because they are the inerrant Word of God. After Egypt's sorrowful forty years' experience and dispersion, this proud country went into a steady decline, and the Word of God was literally fulfilled when it became the basest of kingdoms, so that Israel put confidence no longer in Egypt. After Nebuchadnezzar's raid, Egypt declined and sank lower still under the Persians and the Ptolemies, until she became the granary of Rome. And this degradation has continued throughout the centuries of this age, so that Egypt is literally the basest of the kingdoms. That she will play her part in the future at the close of our age we learn from Daniel's prophecy (Dan. xi:36–45). Egypt will rise into prominence ere long in connection with the present-day world conflict.

Then follows another prediction, the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon (verses 12–21). This also was literally fulfilled. In chapter xxx we find first a prophecy as to the desolation of Egypt and her Allies (verses 1–13).

The prophet's first utterance is concerning the day, "Howl ye! Alas for the day! For the day is near, even the

day of the Lord is near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the Gentiles." What day is this? Other prophets mention the day of Jehovah as a day of judgment and wrath when the Lord will deal in His righteousness with the nations of the earth. (See Isa. ii, xiii:6, 9; Joel i:15, ii:1, 11, iii:14; Amos v:18, 20; Obad. xv; Zeph. i:7, 14; Zech. xiv:1, etc.) This day in its final meaning is the day on which the Lord Jesus Christ will be visibly revealed from heaven. It is mentioned in the New Testament in 1 Thess. v:2; 2 Thess. ii:2 (where "day of Christ" should be rendered "day of the Lord") and 2 Peter iii:10. This day will bring "man's day" to a close and usher in a new age, when righteousness shall reign as grace reigns now. This day of coming judgment of all nations is seen also here in a prophetic perspective. All previous judgments of nations as announced by God's prophet's, nations which sinned against Israel the chosen people, foreshadow *the* one great day, when the times of the Gentiles end in the revealed manner (Dan. ii:34, vii:10–14). What came upon Egypt in the past through divine judgment will happen to the Gentile nations in the future at the close of our age, "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. i:7–8). Ever since the times of the Gentiles began with Nebuchadnezzar the divinely appointed head (Jer. xxvii:4–8), this day of the Lord has been drawing near, till now, with the stupendous present-day events, we can see this day rapidly approaching.

Two weeks after the lamentations over Pharaoh, the prophet uttered this solemn and most impressive elegy over the multitude of Egypt and the heathen nations who have gone into sheol. It has been called a weird Dantesque funeral march over the whole heathen world; but it is more than that. We look here into sheol and see the nations gathered there, stripped of their glory, in deepest abasement and shame. Their bodies are in the pit, the grave, and their souls in sheol, the unseen regions. God's patience was

exhausted with them, the measure of their wickedness became full; then judgments swept them off the earth and they passed away and descended into sheol. And what irony there is connected with it! "Whom does thou surpass in beauty? Go down and be thou laid with the uncircumcised." And as the King came there with his multitudes, whom did they find there? Asshur, that is Assyria, is mentioned first: "Asshur is there and all her company." She was a cruel, pitiless, destructive power, and now she, who once caused "terror in the land of the living," is helpless, with all her power gone in the unseen world. Elam, Meshech, Tubal, Edom, the princes of the North and the Zidonians are named as being in existence there. Once great powers, but now cut off, they lie with the uncircumcised in weakness and disgrace. While in chapter xxxi:16 the dead and gone nations were comforted over Pharaoh who descended into sheol; in this passage Pharaoh, who sees these nations, now is himself comforted as he discovers his former enemies there.

A similar statement about sheol as a place of departed nations, who are nevertheless conscious, is found in the book of Isaiah. There the King of Babylon is seen in his descent into sheol. "Sheol from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming; it stirreth up the dead for thee, all the chieftians of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the Kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us? Thy pomps are brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols, the worm is spread under thee, and the worms over thee?" (Is. xiv:9–11). Solemn words these are behind which stands the undeniable truth of a conscious and eternal existence of the human race. But only the New Testament Scriptures give the full light upon the future state.

The destruction of the principal cities of Egypt is announced in verses 13–19. All has been literally fulfilled. Noph is Memphis, the seat of the worship of Ptah and Apis. The city "No" is Thebes, the ancient capital of Egypt,

called by the Greeks "Diospolis," the city of Jupiter. Her ruins bear witness of the past, indescribable splendor. The great temple of Carnac stood there. The other places mentioned are Sin, which is Pelusium, now completely buried in sand. Aven is Heliopolis, the center once of sun-worship; Pi-beseth is Bubastis, where the sacred cats were mummied, likewise a desolation now. Theaphnehes or Daphnis also passed through judgment. What a remarkable fulfillment of what the Lord had announced through His prophet! May we here be reminded in our solemn times that the same omniscient Lord, who knows the end from the beginning, has spoken concerning this age, now closing in its predicted apostasy. Nations today steeped in bloodshed; nations filled with covetousness and hatred; an apostate professing Christendom and the indifferent masses have written over against them the judgment-wrath of the coming King. And He who fulfilled the words spoken through Ezekiel will also fulfill every other prediction uttered by His holy prophets and apostles.

The chapter closes with a prophetic description of the work of King Nebuchadnezzar, whom God used to execute His righteous judgments.

6. Pharaoh's Greatness and His Overthrow: Chapter xxxi. Pharaoh's greatness is described in the first part of the chapter (verses 1–9). He is compared to the Assyrian, once so powerful and proud. The fall and desolation of the proud monarch under the picture of a tree follows in verses 10–14. The overthrow of Egypt and the resulting consternation among the nations is predicted in the last section of this chapter (verses 15–18).

7. Lamentations and the Great Funeral Dirge: Chapter xxxii. The lamentation over Pharaoh is contained in verses 1–10, followed by the final announcement of the sword of the King of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, in verses 11–16. The most interesting part in this last chapter of these great predictions of national judgments is the funeral dirge and the unveiling of the unseen world (verses 17–32).

II. PREDICTIONS AFTER THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

Chapters xxxiii-xlviii.

A. THE WATCHMAN: THE FALSE SHEPHERDS AND THE TRUE SHEPHERD.

CHAPTERS XXXIII AND XXXIV.

1. The Renewed Call of Ezekiel as Watchman. Chapter xxxiii: 1–20.
2. Ezekiel's Mouth Opened After Jerusalem's Fall is Announced. Chapter xxxiii:21–33.
3. Message Against the Shepherds of Israel. Chapter xxxiv:1–19.
4. The True Shepherd and Restoration Promised. xxxiv:20-26.

1. The Renewed Call of Ezekiel as Watchman: Chapter xxxiii:1–20. The commission of Ezekiel as watchman corresponds to the same call in chapter iii:16–21. In verses 10–20 the prophet announces certain principles of Divine justice.

The exiles knew that the just wrath of God rested upon them as a nation and that their sins were unforgiven. Therefore they asked, "If our transgressions and sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?" They also accused the Lord of inconsistency by saying, "the way of the Lord is not equal" (verse 20; see also xviii:25, 29). The answer Jehovah sends them makes known the principles on which He will deal with them individually as a just God. "O ye house of Israel, I will judge you every one after his ways." Judgment rested upon them as a nation, but the individual still could turn to the Lord in repentance. What a wonderful declaration it is which is recorded in verse 11! "Say unto them, as I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" What compassion and mercy! As it was a day of judgment which had come upon them, true repentance was the needed thing. A past righteousness could not shield

them from the judgment if sin had been committed. "As for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness." The wicked confessing and forsaking his sin would find mercy and forgiveness, while those who were impenitent would surely die and not live. "None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him; he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live." And this gracious promise was given in anticipation of the work of the cross, the redemption by the blood of Christ, by which God's righteousness is declared in passing thus over sins of Old Testament believers who turned to God (Rom. iii:25). The principles of Divine justice are summed up in verses 18 and 19: "When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby. But if the wicked turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby." Needless to say, all this must be viewed as under the law-covenant. But their complaint that the way of the Lord is not equal was wrong; it was their way which was not equal. They were to be judged each according to what he had done.

2. Ezekiel's Mouth Opened After Jerusalem's Fall is Announced: Chapter xxxiii:21–33. In chapter xxiv:27, the promise had been given to Ezekiel that when the one who escaped from Jerusalem when it fell, arrived, the prophet should no longer be dumb. This dumbness evidently does not mean that he was continually silent, without uttering a word, for he prophesied what is written in chapters xxv-xxxii. He was to be dumb concerning Israel; the intervening chapters, before the messenger came, concern other nations. And now that promised messenger arrived and his mouth was opened again to prophesy about Israel. The first message is one of rebuke, describing their condition.

3. Message Against the False Shepherds of Israel: Chapter xxxiv:1–19. The shepherds of Israel were the kings and princes and all who had authority over them. The prophet Jeremiah had received a similar message (Jer. xxiii:1–2). These shepherds of Israel were responsible for the deplorable

condition of the flock. Utterly selfish, they cared not for the sheep of His pasture; they feared not God not did they have a heart for God's people. The flock was scattered and spoiled.

Such was the sad condition of the people Israel. And when the Lord Jesus appeared in their midst to seek the lost sheep of the house of Israel, He found them as sheep without a shepherd, and He had compassion upon them (Mark vi:34). But they rejected Him and the Shepherd was smitten. Zechariah's prophecy was fulfilled: "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts. Smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered, and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones" (Zech. xiii:7). The false shepherds, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, were a curse to the people, and the leaders were against the Shepherd. They delivered Him into the hands of the Gentiles. And now for nearly 2,000 years the sheep have been scattered and peeled, wandering among the nations of the earth (Luke xxi:24). What is their hope and coming blessing we learn from this great prophecy.*

In verses 7–10, judgment is pronounced upon these false shepherds, and after that the Lord announces the deliverance of His flock (verses 11–19).

"Behold, I myself, even I, will search for my sheep and will seek them out." Jehovah arises in behalf of His scattered sheep. He will Himself exercise the office of a true shepherd, seeking out His flock. The cloudy and dark day (the times of the Gentiles) is gone and another morning breaks, the morning for which His people have waited so long. What He will do at that time for His scattered sheep is now fully proclaimed. "I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring

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*What is said in this chapter of the false shepherds who ill-treated the flock of God, His ancient people, may also be applied to the false shepherds, the hirelings in the professing church. See Acts xx:28-35 and 1 Peter v:2-3.

them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be; there shall they lie down in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord." And all this has not yet come to pass. Some apply these words to the restoration of a remnant from the Babylonian captivity and see no future fulfillment of these promises. It is evident that the returning remnant did not possess these blessings. Others make a spiritual application and claim that it means the church and the blessing which Gentiles will receive as the sheep of Christ. This is the common path which most commentators follow. It needs no lengthy refutation, for neither Ezekiel, nor the other prophets know nothing of the church and the "other sheep," Gentiles saved by grace and with believing Jews constituting the one flock (John x:16; Ephes. iii-1–6). This is unrevealed in the Old Testament. These gracious words of promise have not yet been fulfilled, nor will they be fulfilled as long as the church, the body of Christ is being gathered out from all nations. All must wait till God's purpose in this age is accomplished. When the church is complete as to its elect number, when the Lord has come for His saints and the true church has passed from earth into glory, then will the Lord turn in mercy to His people Israel and these promises given by Ezekiel will be fulfilled.

4. The true Shepherd and Restoration Promised: Chapter xxxiv:20–26. Some have applied this to Zerubbabel, the head of Judah at the return from the Babylonish captivity; this is done by those who deny a future restoration of Israel. Others take these words in a strictly literal sense and teach that David the King will become the head of the nation once more, and raised, from the dead, will be the one shepherd over His people. It is not David, but He who is according to the flesh the Son of David and David's Lord as well. The one Shepherd can only be the Messiah. Numerous

passages show that David's name is used in a typical sense. Jeremiah announced, "They shall serve the Lord their God, and David their King, whom I will raise up unto them" (Jer. xxx:10). Here David stands typically for Christ, the Messiah of Israel, for He is raised up unto them when Jacob's trouble is ended (verses 1–7). Of Him Jeremiah speaks more fully in chapter xxiii:5–6: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is the name whereby He shall be called, the Lord our Righteousness." The two, Judah and Israel, will be reunited by the one Shepherd. The Messiah of Israel is also mentioned by Hosea as David: "Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God and David their King, and shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days" (Hosea iii:5). Isaiah speaks of the sure mercies of David, and adds, "Behold I have given Him for a witness to the people, a leader (prince) and commander to the people." It is therefore not David, raised from the dead, but the Prince of Peace, who was here once to seek the lost sheep of the house of Israel and who comes again to save the remnant of His people Israel and to receive the Throne of David (Isa. ix:6–7)

When the Lord is doing all that is promised here and the remnant has accepted the long rejected Messiah-King, a covenant of peace and blessing will follow. "And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land, and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. Peace will come to the land and to the whole earth with His Coming. The evil beasts, the Gentile world powers (Dan. vii) will no longer devastate the land. All will be peace and safety, so that they can sleep peacefully in the woods. "There shall be showers of blessing" (verse 26). How often a hymn is sung based upon this promise:

"There shall be showers of blessing,
This is the promise of love."

But how few who sing it know that the promise belongs first of all to Israel. When the Lord comes, the showers of blessing will be poured forth upon His people and upon all nations. It will be "the times of refreshing" (Acts iii:20). Verses 27 and 28 give a brief description of the millennial Kingdom. Groaning creation will then be delivered and the wild beasts will have their natures changed (compare verse 28 with Isa. xi:6–9 and Rom. viii:19–22). There is no need to speculate on the meaning of "the plant of renown," which will be raised up. It is none other than He, who, as to His humiliation, is described as "a tender plant" and "as a root out of a dry ground" (Isa. liii:2). But now He appears in all His glory, and becomes the plant of renown. Their shame and suffering will then be over. He will be their God and they will be His people.

B. JUDGMENT ANNOUNCED AND ISRAEL'S FINAL RESTORATION PROMISED.

CHAPTERS XXXV AND XXXVI.

1. The Message Against Mount Seir and Idumea. Chapter xxxv
2. The Message of Comfort to Israel. Chapter xxxvi.

I. The Message Against Mount Seir and Idumea: Chapter xxxv. This is another judgment message, which is closely related to the coming restoration of Israel. When the Lord is merciful to His people and bestows upon them the promised blessings, He will also deal with their enemies in judgment. Edom was the most bitter enemy of Israel, their blood-relation. The judgment threatened here was executed upon Edom; but it has a prophetic meaning of the judgment which is in store for the enemies of God's people when the times of the Gentiles end and God arises in behalf of His suffering and persecuted people.

Then, in verses 14–15, we hear of the time of rejoicing which will come for His people when their enemies are judged (Deut. xxxii:43).

2. The Message of Comfort to Israel: Chapter xxxvi. With this chapter the great prophetic utterances of Ezekiel begin concerning the future restoration and blessing of Israel. From here on to the end of the book, all is still unfulfilled, nor can it be fulfilled until the Lord Jesus Christ comes again and is enthroned as King. The first seven verses announce once more the future judgment of Israel's enemies. Then comes the promised return to the land (verses 8–15). The mountains of Israel, barren so long, shall be inhabited again. Israel's past sins and chastisement are reviewed in verses 16–20, and then comes that great message of restoration and blessing through grace in that day when their once rejected King returns and they bow before Him. The characteristic words in verses 23–28 are the words "I will do." It is the word of sovereign grace. Eighteen times Jehovah says what He will do. They are the "I wills" of Israel's Hope and coming Glory.

He will gather them from among the nations and all countries and bring them back to their own land. Only a superficial expositor can speak of a fulfillment when they returned from Babylon. But even if this were so, though it is not, the verses which follow have never been fulfilled in the past. The cleansing of the nation is next promised: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean." It refers us to the water mixed with the ashes of the red-heifer, which was sprinkled with a hyssop on the unclean, typifying the precious blood of Christ in its cleansing power (Heb. ix: 13–14, x:22). Thus, when the people of Israel believe on Him and look upon Him whom they pierced (Zech. xii:10), they will be cleansed. "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. xiii:1). Then follows the promise of the new birth of Israel. "A new heart will I also give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." The stony heart is to be taken away and they will receive a heart of flesh. Our Lord had this passage in mind when He talked with Nicodemus about the new birth. Nicodemus, the teacher in Israel, was ignorant of the fact

that this new birth for Israel is necessary in order to be in that coming kingdom and to receive its blessings. Therefore the Lord said to him, "If I have told you earthly things (about Israel and the new birth as the way into the kingdom) and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" (the heavenly blessings which follow His sacrificial death).

C. THE FUTURE BLESSINGS OF ISRAEL. THE NATION RE-GATHERED: THEIR ENEMIES OVERTHROWN. THE MILLENNIAL TEMPLE AND THE DIVISION OF THE LAND.

CHAPTERS XXXVII-XLVIII.

1. The Vision of the Dry Bones. Judah and Israel Re-united. Chapter xxxvii.
2. Gog and Magog and Their Destruction. Chapters xxxviii-xxxix.
3. The Millennial Temple and its Worship. The Division of the Land. Chapters xl-xlvii.

1. The Vision of the Dry Bones. Judah and Israel: Reunited: Chapter xxxvii. The future restoration of Israel, both nationally and spiritually, is now shown to the prophet in a vision. What these dry bones represent and what their revival mean, is explained by the Lord Himself. It may be used in application in different ways, to illustrate certain truths, but the true and only interpretation is the one which is given by the Lord in verses 11–14. But there is an erroneous interpretation of a serious nature which is widely taught and believed among many Christians. Because "graves" are mentioned, beside the dry bones and their resurrection, it is being taught that the vision means physical resurrection. Systems, like Millennial Dawnism *alias* International Bible Student Association and others, which teach the so-called larger hope, a second chance for the impenitent dead, the restitution of the lost, teach that all the Israelites who have died in their sins will be brought out of their graves and then be saved. They use this vision to confirm this invention. An advocate of this theory declared that all

the Christ-hating Pharisees and Sadducees who lived when our Lord was on earth would be raised up when He comes and then believe on Him. Matthew xxiii:39 was used by him as an argument. These restitution teachers also teach that inasmuch as Israel will have a second chance when they are raised from the dead, the Gentile dead will share also in the same. It needs no argument to refute this. The Word of God teaches a twofold resurrection: A first resurrection and a second resurrection, a resurrection of the just and a resurrection of the unjust (John v:28–29). According to the above theory, there would have to be a third resurrection, a resurrection for a second chance and ultimate salvation of those who died in their sins. Of such a resurrection the Bible knows nothing.

In this vision of the dry bones, physical resurrection is used as a type of the national restoration of Israel. It is used in the same way in Daniel xii:2. In that passage the sleep in the dust of the earth is symbolical of their national condition. And when their national sleep ends there will be an awakening. When we read here in Ezekiel of graves, it must not be taken to mean literal graves; the graves are symbolical of the nation as being buried among the Gentiles. If these dry bones meant the physical dead of the nation, how could it be explained that they speak and say, "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost?" The same figure of speech is used in the New Testament. Of the prodigal it is said, "For this my son was dead, and is alive again" (Luke xv:24). Yet he was not physically dead, nor was he made alive physically. Therefore, this vision has nothing whatever to do with a physical resurrection. The late Dr. Bullinger, whose erroneous suggestions have led astray some, also taught that the vision of the dry bones includes resurrection as well as restoration.

Equally bad is that spiritualizing method which takes a vision like this, as well as the hundreds of promises of a coming restoration, and applies it all to the church, ignoring totally the claims of Israel and their promised future of glory. This is the general trend of commentators.

Verses 15–28 predict the reunion of Judah and Israel with one King over them. That King is our Lord. Then the angelic message given to the Virgin when the coming incarnation was announced will be fulfilled: "The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His Father David, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever and of His Kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke i:36–37).

2. Gog and Magog and Their Destruction: Chapters xxxviii and xxxix. There will be at that time of restoration a great and final invasion of the land of Israel. Gog and Magog will invade the land "that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people." The invaders come "against the mountains of Israel which have always been waste; but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely, all of them." In verse 11, the evil purpose of the invader is made known. From all this we learn that the invasion takes place at the time when the Lord has brought back His people and resumed His relationship with the remnant of Israel.

The invasion will happen some time after the beastly empire with its beasthead, the revived Roman empire, in its final ten kingdom form and the clay, with the little horn as leader (Dan. vii; Rev. xiii:1–10) and the false prophet, the personal Antichrist (Rev. xiii:11,etc.) have been dealt with in judgment (Rev. xix:19–20). The stone out of heaven has then fallen upon the feet of the great dream image of Nebuchadnezzar; and as far as the Western confederated world power is concerned, it is now ended. But other nations gather now for an assault. It is a Northern confederacy which sweeps southward to invade the land, as Antiochus Epiphanes did in the past, as well as the Assyrian in the days of Isaiah. These final invading hosts, under the leadership of a powerful king, come like a storm, and like a cloud to cover the land.

But who are they?

The leader is the Prince of Rosh (not as the authorized version has it "the chief prince") of Meshech and Tubal. This prince is the head of the confederacy, and with him

allied are Persia, Cush, Phut, Gomer and Togormah. They come out of the north, or, as it is in Hebrews, "out of the uttermost north" (verse 15). Inasmuch as the Prince of Rosh is addressed in verse 3 as Gog, we take it that Gog is the name given to this prince and leader of these nations. His dwelling place is in the land of Magog. We know from Genesis x:2, that Magog was the second son of Japheth. Gomer, Tubal and Meshech were also sons of Japheth; Togormah was a grandson of Japheth, being the third son of Gomer. Magog's land was located in what is called today the Caucasus and the adjoining steppes. And the three, Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal were called by the ancients Scythians. They roamed as nomads in the country around and north of the Black and the Caspian Seas, and were known as the wildest barbarians. We learn from this that the invading forces, which fall into Israel's land in the future, when Israel has been regathered, come from a territory north of Palestine which today is in the hands of Russia. And here we call attention to the prince, this northern leader, or king, who is the head of all these nations. He is the prince of Rosh. Careful research has established the fact that the progenitor of Rosh was Tiraz (Gen. x:2), and that Rosh is Russia. All students of Prophecy are agreed that this is the correct meaning of Rosh. The prince of Rosh, means, therefore, the prince or king of the Russian empire. But he also is in control of Mechech and Tubal, which are reproduced in the modern Moscow and Tobolsk. Russia, we may well conclude from this, will furnish the man who will lead this confederacy of nations. We write this at a time when Russia is passing through horrors upon horrors. A revolution changed the autocratic government into a democracy, and that gave way to anarchy, produced by satanic powers. From what is written in this chapter, we learn that Russia will ultimately return to the old regime, and will once more become a monarchy to fulfill her final destiny as made known in this sublime prophecy. Well known it is that Russia has been in the past the most pronounced and bitterest enemy of the Jewish

people. What she passes through today is but a fulfillment of what the Lord has spoken: " I will curse them that curse thee." Today, the Jews in Russia may have bright hopes of getting their rights and complete emancipation at last. For a time this may come to pass, but ultimately Russia will turn against them; and, like Pharaoh did, when Israel had left his domain, so this coming King of the North, the prince of Rosh, when Israel is back in the land, will turn against them.

With him come the other nations. Persia, which is even now in part occupied by Russia, will finally be a vassal to this prince of Rosh. Ethiopia and Phut are also in this confederacy. There also is Gomer and all its bands. Gomer, says Delitsch, "is most probably the tribe of the Cimmerians, who dwell, according to Herodotus, on the Maeotis, in the Taurian Chersonesus, and from whom are descended the Cumri or Cymry in Wales and Britain, whose relation to the Germanic Cimbri is still in obscurity." Valuable information is given in the Talmud; Gomer is there stated to be the Germani, the Germans. That the descendants of the Gomer moved northward and established themselves in parts of Germany seems to be an established fact. All this is of much interest. Germany did not belong to the Roman empire, at least the greater part of Germany was never conquered by Rome. She will therefore not participate in the Western confederacy. Will she then become united to Russia and march under the prince of Rosh into the land of Israel? We cannot be sure about all these things. This, however, we know, that a powerful confederacy of nations, under the leadership of the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal, will come up against Immanuel's land, when Israel has been restored and dwells safely.

The judgment and destruction of the invading hosts are vividly pictured in the thirty-fourth to thirty-ninth chapters as well as their burial. Compare verses 17-20 with Rev. xix:17–18; though the great supper in Revelation and Jehovah's sacrifice here in Ezekiel are not identical, yet

both are judgments. The final paragraphs of this chapter (verses 21–29) give the promise of glory.

The last verse contains an important statement. The Lord says that He hides His face no more from them. This in itself shows that all this is not yet here; for still He hides His face from them. The hiding of His face from them will be no more when His Spirit is poured upon them. "I have poured out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God." There comes then a time when the house of Israel, the literal descendants of Abraham, will receive an outpouring of the Spirit of God. Such is also the message of Joel, in which restoration and spiritual blessing, through the outpouring of the Spirit are blended together (Joel ii). We call attention to another passage which should be linked with the statement in this chapter. Isaiah xxxii:13–18 is a very striking prophecy. There is an announcement made first of all concerning the judgment which is to fall upon Israel's land. "Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briers; yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city," etc. But this is not to last forever. An "until" follows. "Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high." This is the same future outpouring of the Spirit of God. Up to now it has not been. The Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost came to form the body of Christ; but this outpouring in connection with Israel has another significance.*

3. The Millennial Temple and its Worship, and the Division of the Land: Chapters xl-xlviii. The final nine chapters of this book form the climax of the great prophecies of Ezekiel; they belong to the most difficult in the entire prophetic Word. Once more the hand of the Lord rests upon the seer and in the visions of God he is brought into the land of Israel. In the very beginning of this grand finale we learn therefore that the visions concern the land of Israel. Let us remember, that after the fall of Jerusalem

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*The hodge-podge teachings of the Pentecostal movement apply all these promises to the church.

had been announced to Ezekiel (chapter xxxiii:21), his prophetic utterances and visions concern the future when Israel is to be regathered and restored to the land. The previous two chapters dealt with the last invasion of the land of Israel and the complete overthrow of Gog and its hordes. The vision contained in this last section follows after Israel's final deliverance. So much is clear as to the time when the prophecies of these eight chapters will be accomplished. They have not been fulfilled in the past, certainly not in the remnant which returned under Zerubbabel and Ezra. Nor have these prophecies been fulfilled since then. All is future. Only when the Lord has gathered Judah and Israel, when He has established His glorious Kingdom in their midst and delivered His people and the land from the last invader, will this last vision of Ezekiel become history.

This disposes then at once of the different modes of interpretation employed by so many expositors of this book. These are the following:

1. The theory of interpretation which looks upon the vision of these chapters as fulfilled in the return of the remnant from Babylon. One of the expositors who follows this line stated that these visions are "an ideal representation of the Jewish state about to be restored after the captivity." It does nor need much argument to show that this mode of interpretation is erroneous. The temple which the remnant built does in no way whatever correspond with the magnificent structure which Ezekiel beheld in his vision. The fact is, if this temple is a literal building (as it assuredly is) it has never yet been erected. Furthermore, it is distinctly stated that the glory of the Lord returned to the temple and made His dwelling place there, the same glory which Ezekiel had seen departing from the temple and from Jerusalem. But the glory did not return to the second temple. No glory cloud filled that house. And furthermore no high priest is mentioned in the worship of the temple Ezekiel describes, but the Jews after their return from Babylon had high priests again. Nor can the stream of

healing waters flowing from the temple as seen by Ezekiel be in any way applied to the restoration from the Babylonian captivity. Expositors who follow this mode of interpretation claim that all has been fulfilled and that there is nothing in store for Israel in the future. It is the most superficial method and totally wrong.

2. Another interpretation claims that the whole vision sprang from the imagination of the prophet. That it is all an ideal description of something which the expositor himself is unable to define. This mode of interpretation needs no further mention and answer.

3. The third interpretation of these chapters is the allegorical, which spiritualizes everything, and claims that the Christian church, its earthly glory and blessing, is symbolically described by the prophet. This is the weakest of all and yet the most accepted. But this theory gives no exposition of the text, is vague and abounds in fanciful applications, while the greater part of this vision is left unexplained even in its allegorical meaning, for it evidently has no such meaning at all.*

The true interpretation is the literal one which looks upon these chapters as a prophecy yet unfulfilled and to be fulfilled when Israel has been restored by the Shepherd and when His glory is once more manifested in the midst of His people. The great building seen in his prophetic vision will then come into existence and all will be accomplished.

But while we are sure of the strictly future fulfillment of this final vision, the many details which abound in these chapters can hardly be fully interpreted as to their meaning. Much is obscure. That all has a deeper meaning we do

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*What strange applications have been made of this vision! We quote from the "New Century Bible," which says concerning this temple: "Its details shed a light nowhere else vouchsafed to us upon the ideals of *Hebrew art*, influenced perhaps, by Babylonian masterpieces, yet entirely national and Puritan; and they embody in material form Ezekiel's sober but intense conception of religion, as completely as the Gothic cathedrals translate into concrete and abiding stone and marble the soaring visions of mediaeval Christianity."(!)

not doubt; and here and there we shall offer suggestions, but many things we shall have to pass over. Before we turn to the text and open up the contents of these chapters, a telescopic view of the whole section is in order and will be helpful in our further studies.

As it will be impossible to give a detailed explanation of this future temple we give an analysis of these chapters. Our larger work on Ezekiel will be found helpful in a better understanding of this portion of this book.

I. The Description of the Temple. Chapters xl-xlii.

Chapter xl.

1. The Introduction. Verses 1–4.
2. The Gate toward the East. Verses 5–16.
3. The Outer Court. Verses 17–27.
4. The Inner Court. Verses 28–37.
5. The Tables for the Offerings and the Chambers for the Inner Court. Verses 38–47.
6. The Porch of the House. Verses 48–49.

Chapter xli.

1. The Holy Place. Verses 1–2.
2. The Most Holy. Verses 3–4.
3. The Side Chambers. Verses 5–11.
4. The Hinder Buildings and the Measurement. Verses 12–14.
5. Description of the Interior of the Temple. Verses 15–26.

Chapter xlii.

1. The Priest's Chambers in the Inner Court. Verses 1–14.
2. The Final Measurements. Verses 15–20.

II. The Temple Worship. Chapters xliii-xlvi.

Chapter xliii.

1. The Return of the Glory of the Lord and Filling the House. Verses 1–9.
2. The Address to the Nation. Verses 10–12.
3. The Dimensions of the Altar. Verses 13–17.
4. The Offerings to be Bought. Verses 18–27.

Chapter xliv.

1. The Outward Eastern Gate for the Prince. Verses 1–3.
2. The Charge concerning the Strangers and the Rebellious Tribes. Verses 4–14.
3. The Charge concerning the Priests, the Sons of Zadok. Verses 15–27.
4. The Inheritance of the Priests. Verses 28–31.

Chapter xlv.

1. The Portions of the Priests, the Levites, of the whole House of Israel, and the Prince. Verses 1–8.
2. Concerning the Prince. Verses 9–17.
3. The Feast of Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles. Verses 18-25.

Chapter xlvi.

1. The Worship of the Prince. Verses 1–8.
2. Further Instruction as to Worship. Verses 9–15.
3. Concerning the Prince, his Sons and his Servants. Verses 16–18.
4. A Final Description of places in the Temple. Verses 19–24.

III. The Vision Concerning the Land. Chapters xlvii-xlviii.

Chapter xlvii.

1. The Waters of Healing from the Temple. Verses 1–12.
2. Borders of the Land. Verses 13–21.
3. Concerning the Stranger in the Land. Verses 22–23.

Chapter xlviii.

1. The Portion of the Seven Tribes. Verses 1–7.
2. The Oblation for the Sanctuary, for the City, and for the Prince. Verses 8–29.
3. The Gates of the City and its new Name. Verses 30–35.

Without entering into the measurements, the architecture, and other features of this great Temple, we point out a few things which are important. First, as to the contents of the interior of this Temple. The words "silver and gold" are not mentioned once in Ezekiel xl-xlviii. Silver typifies grace in redemption, being the ransom money. Gold typifies divine righteousness. Both are absent in the millennial temple, for what the silver and gold foreshadows is now realized in His redeemed earthly people. The heavenly

Jerusalem has gold in it, but silver is not mentioned in the description of the city in Revelation xxi.

The chief ornaments in this temple are cherubim and palm trees; they were along the wall of the temple. So it was in the temple of Solomon. "And he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubim and palm trees and open flowers within and without" (1 Kings vi:29).

A palm tree was between cherub and cherub. As stated in the previous chapter, palms are the emblems of victory and remind us of the feast of tabernacles. They were seen high above on the posts. Cherubim speak of the presence of the Lord, who enters this house and is worshipped here. But the cherubim here have only two faces and not four as in the opening vision of this book (chapter i:10–12). As often stated, these celestial beings tell out the Lord Jesus Christ in His personal glory. The lion, His kingly glory; the face of a man, His true humanity; the face of an ox, His servant character; and the face of an eagle, His heavenly origin and destiny, Son of God. It is not without meaning that the face of a man and the face of a young lion are seen on these cherubim and each face looks upon a palm tree. Its symbolical meaning is obvious. The Lord Jesus Christ has come again and visited the earth and the temple and appeared as the glorified Man and the Lion of the tribe of Judah. His is the victory and the glory. When at last this temple stands in Israel's land, and its meaning and measurements, as well as other details, are fully known and understood, it will be known then that His blessed work, victory and person are symbolically seen throughout this house.

In the forty-third chapter we read of the returning Glory. The Glory will fill this house.

We must notice here especially, that the vision the prophet beheld was "according to the appearance of the vision" he saw before the destruction of the city; "the visions were like the visions," which he saw "by the river Chebar." This points back to the first chapter, when first by the river Chebar the heavens were opened to Ezekiel the priest, and he saw visions of God. At the close of that chapter, we read

after the recorded vision, "This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord." The same vision of glory appeared again to him when Ezekiel had left the river Chebar and gone into the plain (iii:22–23). Then he had witnessed the gradual and solemn departure of the glory of the Lord. "Then the glory of the Lord departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubim. And the cherubim lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight . . . They stood at the door of the east gate of the house of the Lord, and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above" (x:18–19). Then finally the Shekinah went up and disappeared. "And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city" (xi:22).

The similarity of the departure of the glory of the Lord from the temple before its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar and its future return to the temple of Ezekiel's vision is most interesting. It is the same glory which departed, which returns; it is the same Lord, who resumes relationship with His earthly people. The withdrawal of the visible glory of the Lord meant the departure of His gracious presence from among His people, which was followed by, judgment. The return of the visible glory means the return of His gracious presence among them, and that the judgment, which has lasted so long, is forever gone. The departure of the glory was through the east gate and was finally seen upon the mountain at the east side of the city; the return is from the way of the east, and the glory of the Lord enters through the east gate. But it is not only a visible glory, but the Lord Himself is in the Shekinah, Ezekiel beheld above the firmament and the cherubim, when he saw the glory of the Lord at the river Chebar, he heard His voice. And here also His voice is mentioned "like the sound of many waters." From verses 6 and 7, we learn, that after the glory had entered the house, the Lord addressed the prophet out of the house.

The Lord Himself in all His glory is manifested and enters

the temple, the place of His rest and glory. The cherubim will be seen in person, and from the New Testament we learn that angels will be with Him also. His glory will then cover Israel's land and the earth. "His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise. And His brightness was as the light; He had bright beams out of His side* and there was the hiding of His power." This is how Habakkuk describes the same manifestation of the glory of the Lord and the coming of the Lord of glory. (See Isa. xl:5, lviii:8, lx:1–2, lxvi:18). Isaiah's great vision may be viewed as foreshadowing this manifestation of His glory. He saw the Lord sitting upon a throne and His train filled the temple. The seraphim cried one unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory. And as the prophet was cleansed and his iniquity taken away, and as he became the messenger of the Lord (Isa. vi), so the nation Israel will be cleansed and forgiven and become the messenger of Jehovah.†

When the Spirit had transported the prophet into the inner court of the temple, he discovered that the glory of the Lord filled the house. We repeat it, no such thing happened when the returned Jewish remnant had entered the temple. When the old men, who had seen the Solomonic temple and knew of its glory, beheld the foundation of the second temple, they wept (Ezra iii:12). When the house was dedicated, no glory returned, no cloud was seen, no Shekinah filled the house. Nor is it a spiritual glory, the glory of the church, as so many seem to believe.

But Haggai, who with Zechariah prophesied during the rebuilding of the temple, uttered a significant prophecy while that second house was building—a prophecy which must be linked with Ezekiel's vision of the returning glory: "For thus saith the Lord of Hosts: yet once it is a little while,

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*Marginal reading.

†Such an application seems warranted in view of the message Ezekiel received from the Lord to the people (verses 6–12).

and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory" (Haggai ii:6–7). This was not the house they were building. It is a future house, a future temple. That house will be built when the heavens and the earth are being shaken, when all nations shake, and when the Desire of all nations, the King of glory, the Prince of Peace, our Lord comes. Then this house will be filled with glory.

It will be a visible glory. It will be a permanent glory. He will now dwell gloriously in the midst of the children of Israel (verse 7). This visible glory will be seen over Jerusalem, like as it was of old, a cloud by day and a shining, flaming fire by night. "And Jehovah will create over every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and over its convocations a cloud by day and a smoke and the brightness of a flame of fire by night, for over all the glory shall be a covering" (Isa. iv:5).

Another acknowledged difficulty is the one concerning the restored sacrifices and ordinances.

But what do these ordinances mean? Here are priests again standing before an altar, bringing bloody sacrifices, burnt offerings, sin offerings and peace offerings. Is this to be taken literally also? Some expositors have stated that all this had a meaning in the past and could only be true in connection with the second temple. Others attempt to read into it a spiritual meaning. All, or nearly all commentators, think it inconceivable that such sacrifices could ever be brought again in a future temple. Those expositors who combat the premillennial coming of the Lord and the literal restoration of Israel, consider the supposed impossibility of a satisfactory explanation of this part of Ezekiel's visions, the collapse of the premillennial argument.

Sacrifices of bulls and goats were brought by Israel in their past history; the Lord commanded His people to do this. Every Christian knows that these sacrifices foreshadowed the work of Christ, His great sacrifice on the Cross. In themselves these sacrifices Israel brought could not take

away sins, nor give rest to the conscience, nor could they make the worshipper perfect. The Epistle to the Hebrews demonstrates this fully.

All these sacrifices had a prospective character, looking forward to the work of the Cross. And when the Lamb of God died, when His blessed lips uttered the never-to-be-forgotten words, "It is finished," and God's hand rent the veil from top to bottom, the prospective character of these sacrifices was forever ended. The new and living way into God's presence, into the Holiest, had been made by His blood. During this age Israel has no temple, and all their Levitical ordinances can no longer be practised by them. As Hosea declared, they are without a sacrifice (Hos. iii:4).

God, during this age, our present age, which began with the rejection of Christ by Israel and ends with His Return, is gathering a heavenly people, the church. The church has for its worship no earthly place, no temple, but worships in spirit and in truth, in a heavenly sanctuary. There are no sacrifices, priests, altars, in connection with the true church, the body of Christ. Christ is all. He is the sacrifice, the priest and the altar. That the enemy has produced upon Christian ground a ritualism which is aped after the Jewish system and which denies as such the Gospel and Christianity, is well known. They have invented altars, and sacrifices, and priests. This is the Judaizing of the church, "the other Gospel which is not another," upon which the Spirit of God has pronounced the curse of God (Gal. 1). The day is coming when the Lord will deal in judgment with the apostate church which denies His Son and His work, while His true church will be taken to the place which He has prepared.

After the prophecy of the division of the land, comes the majestic ending, the last message this man of God uttered: "And the name of that city from that day shall be 'Jehovah Shammah,' the Lord is there." It is a fitting finale to this great Book. In its beginning, we see the glory of the Lord departing. Throughout the pages of the Book we read of Israel's rebellion, Jerusalem's judgments, the nation's dis-

obedience and rejection. Then follow the messages of Hope —Israel's conversion, the regathering of the twelve tribes, the final conflict, the returning glory of the Lord; and from that day the name of the city will be Jehovah Shammah. Because He has manifested His gracious presence in the midst of His people and established His throne, blessed His people with all the spiritual and national blessings promised by His holy prophets, destroyed all their enemies, and covered all with His visible glory once more, therefore the city will have the name "Jehovah is there." What a glory it will be for Him. The city through which He once walked with weary feet, the Son of God garbed in servant's form, the city through which He was dragged, when the cross was laid upon His shoulders, the city which cast Him out, the city outside of which He endured the cross and despised the shame—that same city will be made in that day the glory spot of the earth.

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